

Secret of Mana: Reborn
Localization Commentary (V2.0)

Made by: The SAP Team

Preface to V2.0

Overall, the SAP team was very pleased with how V1.x evolved. We received enough feedback from the community to justify eleven small updates over the course of 1 ½ years.

After waiting another year, we identified enough avenues of improvement to justify another update. Most of the 2020 team was not available (and in one tragic case, passed away quite young), but we were able to convince a few folks to come back for a bit and briefly revisit some of our previous work.

The pure, ultra-literal translation we made as the basis for this project three years ago was extensively reexamined. We found ways to implement dozens of nuances that weren't in our first effort. We also watched streams and consulted playtesters to find remaining areas where things could be improved. Remaining grammar and typographical errors were corrected. Finally, hundreds of lines were rewritten for clarity and fluidity. The size of the script went from 126.6KB to 128.3KB.

About 25% of the text changed from V1.11 and we decided to release this as V2.0, instead of another iteration of V1.x. We resisted adding any new scenes or additional lore as we are satisfied with our 2020 effort, and replicating the same creative energy would be nigh impossible now.

This Commentary has been completely overhauled. Originally, we envisioned exhaustive line-by-line academic footnotes that we figured would be ignored by all but the most interested players. The many pages took on a life of their own, however. The original goal was a bit too lofty as maintaining it was taking a massive amount of time, and problems abounded no matter how much we tried to address them. Eventually, we decided it'd be more realistic to edit the Commentary down to the most important material in a later release. For V2.0, we've gone further and tried to be as succinct and accessible as possible.

We hope that folks will agree that this is the best Reborn yet.

The SAP Team
November 2023

Preface to V1.x

The fanmade Secret of Mana: Reborn is the first comprehensive script remaster since the game's release in 1993. The Super Nintendo release

suffered from censorship, space limitations, and time constraints. The 2018 remake's script was heavily derivative of its predecessor, adding only a fraction of the remaining content and leaving thousands of words untranslated. Finally, even Seiken Densetsu 2's script is often vague and inconsistent, due in no small part to the game's erratic development. An opportunity has been taken not only to localize the script, but also to explore and iron out some of these elements.

We're aware of two external retranslations of the game. A localization of the game's essential script was made by Reverend Cheddar for the 2011 LP Archive walkthrough. kWhazit, of the Chrono Trigger Retranslation Project, is many years into a total retranslation of the game text which at present is partially complete.

It's worth mentioning FuSoYa's expanded ROM patch, which fleshed out the Super Nintendo script but didn't consult the Japanese source. This is also true of Timbo's Relocalization patch, which further developed FuSoYa's work but didn't revisit the original Japanese script except for names.

We made our own translation of the original Japanese and fans gave feedback on naming preferences and other problems. This revealed that approximately 50% of the material from Seiken Densetsu 2 was not included for the English release. Japanese guides, both for the original release and the remaster, were imported and consulted for extra authentic material.

Combining the new translation, new content, and other minor adjustments, the result is almost twice the content of the original Super Nintendo release. The script's memory size has increased from 66.7KB to 126.6KB. We retained many memorable elements of Ted Woolsey's work, as well as the original American game font.

What we have is appropriately called a remaster of the script and not a conventional retranslation. Hopefully, the result is a long-awaited refresh to the English versions of this game. We dedicate our work to Ted Woolsey, who contrary to popular belief was brilliant in conveying the overall meaning of the text despite lamentable parameters. Countless professionals in Japanese, including our translator, were originally inspired by this and his many other efforts.

The SAP Team
November 2020
Rev. May 2021

Source Legend

- J - The original Japanese script of Seiken Densetsu 2 for the Super Famicom
- E_W - Ted Woolsey's translation for the Super Nintendo
- E_G - The script for the 2018 remaster
- R - Reverend Cheddar's partial translation from the LP archive

G_F - Seiken Densetsu 2 "Fundamental Knowledge Compilation" from 1993
G_S - Seiken Densetsu 2 "Official Setting Material + Complete Strategy Guide", 2018
P - Assorted promotional materials

Romanization conventions used are those of the United States Library of Congress.

General Comments on Names

- 1) We used "Mana Sword" instead of "Holy Sword" for SoM: Reborn. J's Mana Tree refers to it both ways, and the former comes off more distinguished in English.
- 2) J uses "Godbeast" instead of E_W's Mana Beast. However, the latter is more fitting for the final boss, considering the existence of multiple "godbeasts" in the game.
- 3) There are nine temples (神殿 can also be a sanctuary or a shrine): the eight elemental temples plus the Grand Temple. We kept E_W's "Palace" for the first eight, mainly to give the Grand Temple much needed separation as it's connected to the Tree Palace, and that section of the game requires clarity. It's worth noting that Mandala's "Temple" was kept as is for E_W.
- 4) J refers to the javelin as the spear, and the spear as the lance. We aligned with E_W's names for these weapons. The spear is almost always a melee weapon in similar games, and a javelin is recognized as a projectile.
- 5) We aligned with E_W's names for the Mana spirits. The three that are different in J are Salamander (Salamando), Djinn (Sylphid), and Will o' the Wisp (Lumina). Most English speakers have come to know them by the names in parentheses (the recent Trials of Mana remaster used those names).
- 6) There's a French element to many of Seiken Densetsu 2's names, which is not unexpected in Japanese pop culture. This is reinforced by references to the opera Zoroastre and the French Republic, among others.

Character Names

- 1) Fans overwhelmingly suggested we use "Timothy" and "Elliott" instead of J's "Bob" and "Ness."
- 2) We kept Jema for "Gemma."
- 3) Rusa Luka comes from "Rusalka" of Slavic folklore.
- 4) Geshutāru can be localized as "Geshtar" or "Gestahl" like Final Fantasy VI's emperor. His Japanese name is Gastora.
- 5) Further names could have been localized as French-inspired: Sheex/Chic, Vandole/Vent d'or, Dyluck/Dirac, Amar/Amour.
- 6) Malikto (E_W's Mara) was a spell in Wizardry, a major influence on early Square developers.
- 7) Erinice suggests "Erinyes" from Zoroastre.

Weapon Names

For space reasons, the archetypes were often omitted or changed.

- 1) Moogles Claws may suggest Mowgli.
- 2) "Rusted Holy Sword" breaks the character limit, but we used it anyway as it's never seen in Watts' upgrade menu.
- 3) Kusanagi refers to *Kusanagi-notsurugi*, the three Imperial regalia.
- 4) Fiend's Axe is derived from *majin*, a witch or demon.
- 5) Tempest Whip is literally "Gale Wind Whip" in J.
- 6) The Cobra Shuttle is oddly "Bagh Nakh" in J---a knuckle, not a throwing weapon.
- 7) Ninja's Trump is "Wind Demon Shuriken" in J. This is a reference to the Fuma ninja clan of Sengoku fame. Similarly named weapons were localized as "Fuma Shuriken" in other games. However we kept E_w's translation as the weapon is a likely reference to the Kamaiden manga. Here, a similarly named weapon was part of the ninja's *hissatsu*, or ultimate repertoire. Ninja's Trump captures this well.

Armor Names

- 1) The Spiky Suit is "Puncture Suit" in J, suggesting the studded vests of punk rockers.
- 2) Otyugh Ring is a reference to Dungeons & Dragons.
- 3) The Beholder Ring was "b-eye-lder" in J, inspired by Dungeons & Dragons. This had to be corrupted due to TSR's infamous trademark enforcement.

Item Names

- 1) Candy is "Perfectly Round Candy Drop" in J. *Manmaru* from J's name has a cutesy feel to it.
- 2) Chocolate comes from J's "Pakkun Chocolate." *Pakkun* is the sound of vigorous chewing.
- 3) E_w's "Medical Herb" was realized as Shepherd's Purse. The original name (パイパイ草) is likely a play on *pen-pen gusa*, the colloquial name for the herb *nazuna* or shepherd's purse. If you hold it up and spin the stem between your fingers, the chunky heart-shaped leaves bump against each other and make a quiet slapping sound: "pen pen." Here, the katakana is "pui pui" as a joke.)

Enemy Names

- 1) The Mushboom enemy is "Myconid" in J, a Dungeons & Dragons reference.
- 2) Chobin Hood is "Poron" in J, a likely reference to Apollon, the Greek god of archery.
- 3) Garasha (Kimono Bird in E_w) is probably a reference to the Hebrew גָּרַשׁ *garash* (to drive out). Another suggested reference is Hosokawa Gracia [Garasha]. The Gereshom enemy is a reference to the Hebrew גֵּרֶשׁוֹם *gereshom* (expulsion).

- 4) Robin Foot is "Porobin Hood" in J, a pun on hood/foot. These are similar in katakana.
- 5) Weepy Eye is "B-eye-lder" in J, another corrupted D&D trademark. Same with Metal Seer/Metal B-eyelder.
- 6) The Smut Magazine is "Devil Magazine" in J, a possible reference to Devilman by Go Nogai.
- 7) We used Jabberwock as this is the correct name of the monster from the Lewis Carroll poem, but E_w curiously had "Jabberwocky."
- 8) Blood Roper and Otyugh Face are also Dungeons & Dragons references. Aegagropilon is "Mega Xorn" in J, yet another reference.
- 9) *Ichiro-kun* and *Jiro-kun* were localized as "Alfie" and "Bettie" respectively. The Japanese names are a reference to the first and second born sons in a family. These are very plain names like "Tom" or "John" that play into the ridiculousness of the Scorpion Brigade. We considered "Primus" and "Secundus" before settling on Alfie and Bettie (Alpha/Beta).

Other Names

- 10) Potos is a possible reference to the pothos plant.
- 11) Todo Village is "Icy Sea Lion Village" in J.
- 12) The Wave Cannon and Wave Diffuser Cannon attacks are references to Space Battleship Yamato.

Popoie's Pronouns

Strong arguments can be made for he/him/his or they/them/theirs for Popoie. We ultimately went with both, depending on the context. The character is intended to be a mysterious contrast to the boy and girl. In J, Popoie uses *oira*, a casual derivative of *ore*, almost always understood to be masculine. The same pronoun was used for Palom from Final Fantasy IV and Gau from Final Fantasy VI. Popoie is also referred to with words like *oyabun* and *chibisuke* which generally have masculine connotations.

However, the word for "sex" in Japanese is given as "ambiguous", and the 2018 remake used they/them/theirs, which has been widely adopted.

A native speaker who participated in this project had the following to say:

"Popoie's gender self-identification is 'male' by our standard according to how he behaves and presents himself. The sex/biological classification is 'unknown' or even nonexistent because he is not necessarily an organic being. He is more of a manifestation of Mana/magic."

Script Commentary

Any bold text below is the line from our script.

- 1) Like E_w, we were limited to 28 characters per line for a total of 84.

- 2) **ZEKE:** D'ahahaha! Eh? You're all little wimps. The sage said the same --- you still lack discipline. You'd better make a fresh start of it! In J, the laugh dialogue is *geragera*, "uproarious laughter at nothing."
- 3) The song that Sergei sings is almost certainly a reference to *Umisonoai* (love of the sea) by Yuzo Kayama.
- 4) Morie is starting over as a swabbie, i.e. starting at the lowest rank and working his way back up.
- 5) We used "gomers" as a way for Geshtar to refer to the characters. In J, it's *shokun*, a way for military leaders to address subordinates. Geshtar is mocking them with a bit of martial formality.
- 6) It's not clear if all of the Aurum Isle is gold, or just the items on it.
- 7) The *kansaiben* dialect makes an appearance in Gold City.
- 8) The alchemy spoken about on the Aurum Isle is *renkinjutsu*, a familiar term for anime watchers (i.e. FMA).
- 9) **I appreciate the things that matter in life a gold necklace, and a gold ring, and a gold bracelet...** The uncommon first person pronoun *atai* is used, short for *atashi*. It's also a synonym for price/cost/worth.
- 10) Each Cannon Travel man has a unique laugh in J that we kept.
- 11) **RANDI:** Woah, a Rabite in a place like this...? That's nuts! The exclamation at the end is *yabai*, which is somewhat ambiguous here.
- 12) **Hey, if it isn't RANDI. A great light appeared in the sky a little while ago. It seemed to be in the direction of the waterfall. This could be bad, don't you think? Kuwabara...kuwabara...You chant it too! It keeps the misfortune away...** Kuwabara, *kabarara*, akin to "knock on wood", is an apotropaic phrase that we kept untranslated with an explanation as they could just as well be "magic words."
- 13) Jema doesn't initially reveal Luka's gender, which is part of the surprise later.
- 14) Luka uses a set of speech characteristics common to an "ancient" character trope--the pronoun *onushi*, and the frequent sentence ending *ja*. This would remind Japanese readers of Taketori monogatari. Sothis, in Fire Emblem Three Houses, speaks this way as well. We implemented this idea using archaic-inspired English.
- 15) Pamela tells Purim she's soon to be a "sack-of-rice." A word like "sacrifice" is written in katakana in J, implying that she overheard what Thanatos said but is too confused to understand the full meaning.
- 16) The Emperor has four *shitennou* (Thanatos et al), literally "four heavenly kings." We chose "Arbiters" for Reborn.
- 17) The concept of weapon orbs does not exist in J.
- 18) The dwarves used the *tohoku* dialect, a bit of a rural stereotype.
- 19) Erinice literally says that she's "deboned" Pandora's citizens in J.
- 20) **[LUKA:] Thou hast sealed the seed with thy holy Sword.** This was in *Ew*, and not J. It's not clear why Ted Woolsey added it, but it provides some much needed clarification. The state of the seals is not obvious in the beginning of the game.
- 21) Tasnica's sandship is literally named "Sandship" in J.
- 22) We used "aurum" and "gold" depending on the context. In J, *ougon* is generally used for gold, which might be considered more impressive

than *kin*. It also adds some distinction between Gold City and the Aurum (Gold) Isle.

23) Sea hares are called *amefurashi* in Japanese, literally *Ame furashi*, meaning "rain falling." They cluster on rocks near the sea's algae during the rainy season to breed, and thus apparently have some folklore association with rain.

24) J refers to Tasnica's leader as a republic "king", which makes no sense. The 2018 remake went with "chancellor", and we aligned. However, he still has his crown and robes.

25) **BOSS:Holy mackerel! It's you guys again!** A Japanese dictionary confirmed "Holy mackerel" as the correct translation.

26) **[MARIKTO:]If you tell the lookout the secret number, he'll let you through. We were inspired by the great Miyamoto Musashi. "Mu-sa-shi" sounded like "6-3-4" in his language, so the password's 634!** 634 is *goroawase* (wordplay) for Musashi in Japanese. This nuance would be lost on English speakers, so we implemented it in the text.

27) Shade speaks in a way that comes off more archaic than Luka.

28) The goblin lines were written entirely in katakana in J, used for non-natural speech. We implemented this in all caps, similar to the Dark Elf in Final Fantasy IV.

29) **[TRUFFAULT:]If you get lost in the sky, you can use Flammie's thousand mile eyesight!** In J, this is literally "thousand li foresight", *li* being a Chinese mile.

30) **[KARON:]I'm told that long, long ago, this place was called a "planetarium"...but I have no idea what's meant by that. Despite appearances, it's not really that spacious..."**Planetarium" would normally be written in katakana as it's a loan word, but here it's in hiragana to show that Karon finds the word to be puzzling. It's similar to the "sack-of-rice" above. Due to ambiguity in the line's construction in J, we hadn't settled on its full implications when Reborn V1.0 was released. However, it seems certain that the Moon Palace's orb room is literally a planetarium that's a remnant of an ancient civilization, and Karon's other line about the universe continuing indefinitely ("a lot of nothing" in *E_w*) in the Palace doesn't reference a void. Due to the distance of time, Karon and others haven't discovered what a planetarium is. However, he does know that it's not actually as spacious as it seems as it's a projection.

Additions

The following is a selection of material that we added to the script.

1) This was adapted from cut content from *E_G*.

DYLUCK:We are the Pandora Kingdom Witch Suppression Squad!

We're going to exterminate the evil witch in the Phantom Forest. Where are you headed?

RANDI:I'm actually just trying to find the Water Palace.

DYLUCK:The Water Palace? It's straight ahead. But...that sword you have... how'd you get that...?

RANDI:Oh, I just found it recently. Not too far from here...

DYLUCK:It's old and rusted but...there's a power emanating from it...

I can sense it...but you...?

RANDI:Wait! What do you mean?

DYLUCK:When I was young, I was shunned by those around me because of my own power and...Well, just know that you're not alone...

2) [LUKA:] It's proof that mana is falling from the world!

This was in the original ROM, but not used.

3) [HERMAN:] I feared that since no one taught her how to make a home, she had to be in a place where servants would do those things for her.

This explains more of the cultural context of Herman's intentions.

4)This was adapted from E_G.

RANDI:How many travelers did you manage to fool?

SPRITE:...

RANDI:Tell me!

SPRITE:Eh, actually...you're the only one who fell for it...

RANDI:...

5)This was adapted from E_G.

POPOIE:Phew! Good thing you didn't get any attack magic, big sis!

PURIM:Just what are you trying to say?

POPOIE:If you use too much strong magic, you'll turn into a scary witch for sure! Worse than Erinice!

PURIM:I don't need any strong magic to be a scary witch...

POPOIE:That's why I'm glad you're on my side!

PURIM:...we'll see...

6)This was adapted from cut content from E_G. It provides more background on the sprites.

POPOIE:Gramps!...has the Wind Seed always looked like this? Last time I was here, it seemed different...and delicious...

GRANDPA:The Seed... could it be...? Be wary, little one. The Time of Calamity may be upon us.

POPOIE:The Time of Calami---wha?

GRANDPA:It is a time of turmoil foretold in the oldest of sprite legends. "When the Seed's power falls...the young sprite must begin their journey to face the Time of Calamity." I believe it's your destiny to venture out into the world. You should leave before dusk.

POPOIE:But I've never been allowed out of the forest alone...

GRANDPA:This is serious! Visit Sage Luka at the Water Palace in the Gaia Lowlands. Tell her that our Mana Seed is reacting. You can get there by cannon travel. Take a boomerang with you in case you run into trouble!

POPOIE:Got it, Grandpa! So long, Sprite Forest! And look out, world! I'm off on an adventure!

7)This was adapted from G_F.

[JEMA:]That eye monster was a summoned demon that didn't materialize well. Instead, it became embedded in the building and animated the wall.

8)This was adapted from G_F.

[ELDER:]It was an ancient monster that literally grew up feeding on poison.

9)This was adapted from cut content from E_G.

LUKA:...canst thou hear me?

LUKA:In two centuries, not one such as this hath crossed my path. And I affirm that he conquers his trials with steadfast resolve. Thou wouldst be proud of his determination, Serin. He's as worthy a hero as his father before him.

LUKA:Like father, like son...doth thou concur?

SERIN:.....

10)This was adapted from E_G.

PURIM:Same here! Did you get a look at his wings? I'm sure he's the prettiest dragon in the world!

RANDI:Yep. Flammie's the best!

POPOIE:Hrmph!

RANDI:What's wrong, now?

POPOIE:All this gushing over that scrawny beast!

PURIM:So?

POPOIE>You didn't gush at all when you found me! And I'm one of a kind!

RANDI>You were found at a sideshow...trying to trick folks out of their money!

PURIM:Yeah! That cute little dragon would never treat us that way!

POPOIE:Grr...be like that!

11)This was adapted from G_F.

[SANTA:]It was a phantom that rose from my bitterness...and I would've been trapped in its icy prison forever.

12)This was adapted from G_S.

The Emperor was mortally wounded during the war 15 years ago. It was even proclaimed that an assassination was successful. How was he resurrected? There are theories, but I shudder when I consider some of them...

13)This was adapted from G_F.

Geshtar's knowledge of lost ancient technology is astounding...
Because of his injuries at the desert, he's now part cyborg. He's more powerful than ever as he can integrate with his vehicle!

14) This was adapted from P.

Fanha and Thanatos spend a lot of time talking alone. I wonder what they're up to...

15) This was adapted from cut content from E_G. It provides insight into Mavolia and how the Emperor and his bodyguards gained power.

RANDI: Mavolia? What kind of powers does the underworld have?

SHADE: Mavolia rose from the shackles of ire, envy, antipathy, and ill will towards oth'rs. There, pow'r bestows upon life its meaning, as 'tis proclaimed that those with might ruleth the weak. Heareth ye once more --- ire, envy, antipathy. These adv'rse passions art what feedeth the subjugation of less'r beings, and they tempteth humans into defiling their souls in darkness. At which hour a human forgeth a contract with Mavolia, they win the pow'r they seek in exchange f'r their heart so pure. Anon, they're in the void and want not f'r tranquility. They may dwelleth within the midst of the human realm, but their p'rson is reclaim'd by the und'rw'rld.

16) This was in the original ROM, but not used.

We got some intel that the Empire is planning to send a spy here.

17) This is one of our more extensive paraphrases.

ZEKE: Ahh...you've grown weary from climbing this mountain, humbled by the challenging journey. So rejoice! The time has come! Sage Jacques, this mountain's eminence, is now here in his cave!

The original line in J translates as, "Sage Jahha is in the mountain sage cave. Like every other beast that creeps upon the earth, walk there one step at a time!" The language of the second sentence is very close to the Japanese translation of the Holy Bible's Genesis 1:26. There are multiple ways this could be interpreted, but it seems likely that it serves as a triumphant announcement of Jahha's presence, especially one after repeated visits. There's also a sense of asking the hearers to humble themselves before Jahha.

18) [EMPEROR:] So we went ahead and did just that! While you were strolling around the globe, we made our own sort of offering at the Palaces. Your quest is in vain!

The original script barely references that before the Lost Continent sequence, the Empire unsealed the Seeds that Randi had sealed during his quest.

19) This is adapted from P.

[SHEEX:] Not even the hero of the Mana Sword is a match for the Sword of Darkness!

20) This was added to provide more setting for the Lost Continent sequence.

RANDI: I can't believe it! Who knew there were ruins of a whole civilization under the coral?

PURIM: It's been at the bottom of the ocean for centuries! And this Temple looks massive, even from the sky.

RANDI: We have to keep going! Since they unsealed all the Seeds, we should check on Master Luka!

21) This was added so Luka's dialogue changes before the Mana Holy Land.

LUKA: ...the Mana Holy Land? Our prayers hath been answered!

22) This was added from G_s and P:

[MANA TREE:] He had sacrificed himself to defeat the Emperor, who was later revived by the power of the underworld.

23) In the original, Jema doesn't say anything different when Randi reaches the Mana Fortress.

JEMA: The hour is at hand! The time has come for you to soar to the Mana Fortress. Every foe you have encountered, every ordeal you have endured has prepared you for this moment. Who knows what you will face, but you must never waver...brave knight of the Mana Sword!

24) This was added so Luka's dialogue changes at the end.

LUKA: Oh...hast thou returned from the Holy Land? And...I see...But the truth was to be made known in the right time. At last, thou mayst verily discern thy full destiny...

25) **POPOIE:** Gramps! I'm so glad to see you're all right!

GRANDPA: Yes, little one. They came to break your seal but this time, I sensed that they were coming and hid out in the woods. Now go, restore mana!

This was implemented so Grandpa would acknowledge the seals being destroyed.

26) **RANDI:** ...who also looks like those "beasts of the gods" we saw.

The line in J is, "I guess even Flammie was, originally, a god beast!" But it's not exactly clear how Flammie would originally have been like

the godbeasts that are seen flying throughout the game. Either he's of a species that evolved from them, or this implies that he would have been feral, and became the tamed Flammie after meeting the main characters. It seems more fitting to say that Flammie currently resembles a godbeast and leave it ambiguous. Finally, the Mana Tree said that godbeasts of the world would gather to create the Mana Beast, but it's not clear if this includes Flammie. He may have just disappeared at the end along with Popoie and the Mana Spirits.

The following is a list of non-textual changes between the original release of Secret of Mana and Secret of Mana: Reborn:

27) Outlines have been added to menu text. This was present in the original cartridge but was likely omitted due to how it would appear on a CRT television screen.

28) Dialog can be aborted.

29) The Water Palace's fountain now flows in the correct direction.

30) Alfie (Kilroy) makes the planned grand entrance with the large doors opening.

31) Tsunami's intended tongue taunt animation has been implemented.

32) Ruby Armet was coded, but did not appear in the original game and has been added to Mandala's shop.

33) The door in the Resistance hideout that was previously unreachable now has a path to it. The room behind the door has been constructed from scratch.

34) Aegagropilon's intended devour attack is implemented.

35) Bettie (Kettle Kin) has the chainsaw that was removed from the American release.

36) Some bad editing in the first Kakkara sequence is fixed.

37) The semicolon and music note were added to the font.