

= Himura Kenshin =

Himura Kenshin () , known as Kenshin Himura in the English @-@ language anime dubs , is a fictional character and protagonist of the Rurouni Kenshin manga created by Nobuhiro Watsuki . When creating Kenshin , Watsuki designed him to be the physical opposite of Hiko Seij?r? , a character that appears in Watsuki 's first one @-@ shot manga , " Crescent Moon in the Warring States " ; a character with the same name appears in Rurouni Kenshin as Kenshin 's swordsmanship teacher .

Kenshin 's story is set in a fictional version of Japan during the Meiji period . Kenshin is a former legendary assassin known as " Hitokiri Batt?sai " (?????) (rendered as Battousai the Manslayer in the Media Blasters English anime dub , as Battousai : The Slasher in the Sony English dub , and as The Unsheather on the Japanese kanzenban covers) , more properly named Himura Batt?sai (?????) . At the end of the Bakumatsu , he becomes a wandering samurai , now wielding a sakabat? (??? , lit . " reverse @-@ blade sword ") , a katana that has the cutting edge on the inwardly curved side of the sword , thus being nearly incapable of killing . Kenshin wanders the countryside of Japan offering protection and aid to those in need , as atonement for the murders he once committed as an assassin . In Tokyo , he meets a young woman named Kamiya Kaoru , who invites him to live in her dojo despite learning about Kenshin 's past . Throughout the series , Kenshin begins to establish lifelong relationships with many people , including ex @-@ enemies , while dealing with his fair share of enemies , new and old .

Kenshin 's character was well received by fans , with his holding the top spot in all reader popularity polls for the series . Critics of the series praised his personality , though some complained about his development during the original video animation (OVA) series , which differs from the manga . A variety of collectibles based around Kenshin have been created , including figurines , key chains , plushies , and replicas of his sakabat? sword .

= = Appearances = =

= = In Rurouni Kenshin = = =

Himura Kenshin , real name Shinta (??) , was born on June 20 , 1849 . As a former legendary assassin , Kenshin is an extremely powerful swordsman with virtually unmatched skills . Kenshin practices the Hiten Mitsurugi @-@ ry? (????? , lit . " Flying Heaven Honorable Sword Style ") , a fictional ancient sword art which can be based on Batt?jutsu , that enables him to exercise superhuman speed and reflexes , study and predict his opponent 's movements in battle , as well as perform many powerful sword techniques . Most of his techniques were originally intended to be lethal , but Kenshin has since modified his usage of such techniques in accordance with his vow never to kill . To this end , he fights using his sakabat? (A reversed @-@ edge sword) .

After finishing his job as the murderer " Hitokiri Batt?sai " in the Ishin Shishi , Kenshin assumes the life of a wanderer . Ten years after the Revolution , he arrives in Tokyo , where he meets Kamiya Kaoru . She invites him to stay in her dojo even after she discovers that Kenshin is the " Batt?sai " . During his residence in the dojo , Kenshin establishes lifelong relationships with many people , including ex @-@ enemies , such as the former Shinsengumi member Sait? Hajime . Kenshin desires to protect every individual from danger without harming others . Formerly known as " the strongest hitokiri , " Kenshin is the main target of many old enemies and people who want to gain his title . Thus , he avoids letting others get too close to him personally for their own protection . However , he eventually begins relying on his friends , allowing them to fight alongside him .

When Shishio Makoto , the brutal once @-@ successor to Kenshin 's position as Ch?sh? 's hitokiri , masterminds a movement seeking to overthrow the Meiji Government , Kenshin leaves Tokyo to stop him . To defeat such a foe , Kenshin is forced to resume his training and mend his relationship with his teacher Seij?r? , who taught and took care of Kenshin , originally named Shinta , in his childhood . That childhood training was interrupted when Kenshin decided to protect the people of

Japan . He learns the Kuzu @-@ ry?sen (???? , lit . " Nine @-@ headed Dragon Strike ") , which deals nine simultaneous strikes to the fundamental targets of swordsmanship . The Kuzu @-@ ry?sen , however , is a byproduct used for the initiation in learning Amakakeru Ry? no Hirameki (???? , lit . " Heavens Gliding Dragon Flash " ; Viz translation - " Dragon Flight of Heaven ") , a Hiten Mitsurugi @-@ ry? batt?jutsu that surpasses the speed of the Kuzu @-@ ry?sen . If the strike is avoided or blocked , the force of the unusually fast slashing motion displaces the air around it , generating a vacuum in its wake and sucking the opponent in ; as this happens , the body is spun around for a second stronger strike . Throughout the training , Kenshin also develops a desire to survive to any combat so that Kaoru will not be shocked by his death . After finishing his training , all Kenshin 's friends reunite with him and help him to defeat Shishio and his army .

Months later , a man known as Yukishiro Enishi starts attacking all people that Kenshin meets as an act of revenge for the death of his sister Yukishiro Tomoe . At this moment , it is discovered that Kenshin was married to Tomoe in the Bakumatsu but accidentally killed her when trying to rescue her from a group of assassins . When Enishi finds out about Kenshin 's feelings towards Kaoru , Enishi sets out to kidnap her . He succeeds and leaves behind a professionally made decoy of Kaoru with a sword in her heart , making everyone believe that she had been murdered . Kenshin falls into severe depression and runs off to a village of wanderers to mourn . However , he breaks out of his depression after his friends discover Kaoru is alive . The group goes to rescue her on Enishi 's island . A battle between Kenshin and Enishi follows and when Kenshin wins , he and Kaoru return home . Afterwards , Kenshin learns that since the Hiten Mitsurugi @-@ ry? is only suitable to a wide @-@ framed muscular build like that of Seij?r? 's , his body eventually began to deteriorate and soon he will be unable to use it ever again . Five years later , Kenshin is married to Kaoru and has a son named Kenji . After an encounter with Kaoru 's student My?jin Yahiko , Kenshin gives his sakabat? to him as a gift for his coming @-@ of @-@ age .

= = Creation and conception = =

Watsuki discovered and used the story of Kawakami Gensai , a hitokiri (??? , literally " manslayer ") executed by the Meiji Government . According to Watsuki , when he found that Kawakami maintained a duty to his dead comrades , he decided to create the title character . Since Watsuki 's debut work contained a tall , black @-@ haired man in " showy " armor , the creator wanted to make a character " completely opposite " to the debut character and the new character ended up " coming out like a girl . " According to Watsuki , he used " no real motif " when creating Kenshin and placed a cross @-@ shaped scar when " not knowing what else to do . "

During the development of the pilot chapter of the series , Rurouni , Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story , Watsuki and his editor argued over Kenshin 's speech patterns ; they settled for a " slangy " pattern . For the final version of the first Romantic Story , Watsuki adjusted the dialogue ; in his view , he made Kenshin sound " more as I prefer him now . " Watsuki added Kenshin 's trademark " oro " (??) as a placeholder to be an expression of the English speech disfluency " huh " . Watsuki notes that he was surprised at how much it caught on , and how much he ended up having Kenshin use the sound during the series . Watsuki also planned to make Kenshin older than 30 years old ; his editor commented that it was strange that the main character of a manga for teenagers was so old , so he made Kenshin 28 years old .

At the end of the series , Kenshin appears with short hair . Initially , Watsuki had planned to make his hair shorter before the end , however , he found this to be similar to the character Multi from To Heart . Watsuki based most of Kenshin 's abilities on a real swordsman of the Tokugawa period named Matsubayashi Henyasai , who was skilled in acrobatic techniques . During his fight against Shishio Makoto 's army , Kenshin is given a new sword with a sheath made of wood . Watsuki decided to redesign the sword to make it look as the first one Kenshin had in the series , though it is more difficult to draw .

In the first Rurouni Kenshin kanzenban , published in Japan in July 2006 , Watsuki included a draft page featuring a redesign of Kenshin 's character . To make his X @-@ shaped scar more notable , Watsuki made it long enough to cross his nose . Kenshin 's hair is tied in two tails , which are flowing

to make him look younger , but shorter , to be less androgynous . Watsuki also added a Habaki to Kenshin 's sword to make it easier to draw by simplifying its structure , while also emphasizing strength . Kenshin 's hitokiri look was also redesigned slightly , by making his clothes more damaged and giving him Yukishiro Tomoe 's neck scarf .

In the anime adaptation of Rurouni Kenshin , Watsuki 's designs were combined with the voice talents of Mayo Suzukaze , a voice actress . In producing the English dub version of the series , Media Blasters considered following suit , with Mona Marshall considered as a finalist for voicing Kenshin . Richard Hayworth eventually was selected for the role , giving Kenshin 's character a more masculine voice in the English adaptation . Additionally , Marshall was selected to voice the younger Kenshin during flashback scenes . Clark Cheng , writer of the Media Blasters dub script , said that localizing Kenshin 's unusual speech was a difficult process . His use of " de gozaru " and " oro " were not only character trademarks that indicated Kenshin 's state of mind , but important elements to the story . However , neither is directly translatable to English , and in the end the company chose to replace " de gozaru " with " that I did , " " that I am , " or " that I do . " Kenshin 's signature " oro " was replaced with " huah " to simulate it being a " funny sound " that had no real meaning . Daryl Surat of Otaku USA said that the grammar in Kenshin 's dialogue in the Media Blasters dub and subtitles resemble the grammar in the dialogue of Yoda , a character in Star Wars .

= = = In other media = = =

Kenshin first appeared in two chapters of Rurouni , Meiji Swordsman Romantic Story , the pilot chapters of the manga , in which he arrives in Tokyo and defeats several groups of villains attacking families . In these stories , Kenshin is given a similar personality to the one he has in the series , but his name is unmentioned .

Later , in the movie Rurouni Kenshin : The Motion Picture , Kenshin meets a samurai named Takimi Shigure , who tries to overthrow the Meiji Government and avenge the deaths of his family during the Bakumatsu . Kenshin encounters Shigure and defeats him in order to avoid the start of a war .

In the OVAs , Kenshin is given a more humanized design . There are also numerous changes to his life story compared to that of the manga , including the way he received his X @-@ shaped scar in Rurouni Kenshin : Trust & Betrayal . In Rurouni Kenshin : Reflection , as time passes , Kenshin becomes tortured anew by the guilt of leading a happy life after such a destructive past . He makes the decision to wander again , and Kaoru strongly supports him , promising to welcome him home with a smile and their child . Kenshin eventually becomes ravaged by an unknown disease . However , he decides to assist in the First Sino @-@ Japanese War as he had promised the Meiji Government . After the war 's end , Sagara Sanosuke discovers a gravely injured Kenshin on the shore , who lost his memories and thus cannot come back to Japan . Sanosuke arranges for Kenshin 's return to Tokyo and Kaoru . The two finally meet , and Kenshin collapses into her arms as he clutches her to him . Kaoru then notices Kenshin 's scar has faded away , signifying his death . Nobuhiro Watsuki , after watching the last OVA , was quite unhappy with how the story ended , saying that " Kenshin went through so much crap and deserved a happy ending . "

Kenshin is a playable character in all of the Rurouni Kenshin video games , including Jump Super Stars and Jump Ultimate Stars . In June 2013 , Kenshin was confirmed to be a playable character alongside Bleach 's Ichigo Kurosaki in J @-@ Stars Victory Vs for the PlayStation 3 .

The manga reboot Rurouni Kenshin : Restoration follows Kenshin 's stay in Tokyo as in the original series . Before the reboot , Watsuki also wrote a prequel chapter where Kenshin meets a western doctor during his years of wandering .

In the live @-@ action movie trilogy , Kenshin is portrayed by Takeru Satoh . Watsuki was surprised by Satoh 's work as well as the special effects in the first film which made Kenshin 's character realistic .

= = Reception = =

Kenshin has been highly popular with the Rurouni Kenshin reader base , having ranked first in every Shonen Jump popularity poll of the series , always with more than double the votes of second place . Two polls by the official Rurouni Kenshin anime featured Kenshin as one the series ' most popular characters . In the first , Kenshin was at the top , while in the second he placed second . His Battōsai incarnation was also fifth in the latter one . Watsuki received letters from fans describing Megumi Ogata 's CD book voice as a " good fit " for Kenshin . Watsuki said that he imagined Kenshin 's voice to be " more neutral . " The fact that the CD book voice actors , especially Ogata and Tomokazu Seki , who portrayed Sanosuke , did not get their corresponding roles in the anime disappointed Watsuki . He has also been featured various times in the Animage 's Anime Grand Prix polls , ranking as one of the most popular male anime characters .

An abundance of merchandise have been released in Kenshin 's likeness including keychains , action figures , and plush dolls . Since the manga was published , non functional and functional sakabatō have been produced for purchase by collectors and fans .

Several publications for manga , anime , video games , and other media have provided praise and criticism on the character . T.H.E.M. Anime Reviews criticized that Kenshin 's super deformed appearance in comedy scenes does not suit the context of the character and the series . Mania.com remarks that Kenshin has a " smartass " attitude in a review of volume 8 ; while they noted that is a common attitude in the anime that makes him look out of character . Anime News Network praises Kenshin for being a character that all people enjoy watching due to his comedy scenes . SciFi.com remarked " Kenshin 's schizoid personal conflict between his ruthless killer side and his country-bumpkin " as a perfect way to develop good stories . In About.com 's " Top 8 Anime Love Stories " , Kenshin and Kaoru 's relationship ranked 8th with Katherine Luther noting it a " classic romance . " He was also fifth in IGN 's Top 25 Anime Characters of All Time with writer Chris Mackenzie describing him as " A classic example of a classic anime type , the peace loving killing machine " . In a Newtype poll from March 2010 , Kenshin was voted as the eighth most popular male anime character from the 1990s . Kenshin 's Amakakeru Ryō no Hirameki technique has ranked third in a Japanese survey that featured the most popular moves in manga and anime . In 2014 , IGN ranked him as the fifth greatest anime character of all time , saying that " Although Kenshin 's momentary lapses make him a complete badass and set the stage for some of the most epic sword battles ever animated , Kenshin always goes back to his sweet persona once the danger is gone . "

The development of Kenshin in the Rurouni Kenshin : Reflection OVA series has had negative reviews by many publications . Anime News Network also adds that in Reflection he " continues to be his old mopey self " and criticizes that he never says " oro " , while IGN cited that some moments of the relationship between Kenshin and Kaoru were depressing . However , some reviewers noted Kenshin 's personality in the OVAs to be one of the most complex to ever be animated remarking the fact that he can not forget his bloody past , despite having a peaceful life . In an interview with Mayo Suzukaze , who is the voice actress for the character , says that she started feeling similar to Kenshin after years of work as his voice , and comments that providing the voice for the character was one of her best experiences .

For the 9th Asian Film Awards , Takeru Satoh was nominated in the category " Best Actor " for Kenshin .