

= Sait? Hajime ( Rurouni Kenshin ) =

Sait? Hajime ( ??? ) , known as Hajime Saito in the English @-@ language anime dubs , is a fictional character from the Rurouni Kenshin manga and anime series created by Nobuhiro Watsuki . Being a fan of the Shinsengumi , Watsuki created Sait? as an anti @-@ heroic foil to Himura Kenshin , the main character of the story , while basing him on the real life Shinsengumi member of the same name .

Set during a fictional version of Japan in the Meiji period , Sait? , known as the " Mibu no Okami " ( ????? ? , lit . " Wolf of Mibu " ) , is the former third squad captain of the Shinsengumi , a pro @-@ shogunate force . During the Bakumatsu , he had a long time rivalry with Himura Kenshin , an assassin of the Imperialist cause . In the series , he is initially introduced as an antagonist who encounters and once again duels with Kenshin . It is later revealed that Sait? , who had only been testing Kenshin 's strength , is now a spy agent working for the Meiji Government . After the reveal , Sait? becomes one of the main protagonists of the series , forming an uneasy alliance with Kenshin .

Sait? appears in the featured movies of the series , as well as the original video animation ( OVA ) series and other media relating to the franchise , including a wide range of electronic games . He has also been one of the most popular characters of the Rurouni Kenshin series , ranking near the top of the series ' popularity polls . His character is featured in various types of merchandising developed for the series , such as figurines and key @-@ chains . Several anime and manga publications have commented on Sait? 's character .

= = Creation and conception = =

Nobuhiro Watsuki based Sait? Hajime on the actual historic figure of the same name who was the captain of the third squad of the Shinsengumi in the Meiji era . Watsuki altered the character to a higher degree than the other historic figures who appear in Rurouni Kenshin since the character Sait? has a greater role in the story than the other characters . In the development of Rurouni Kenshin Watsuki planned for Sait? to be a " dirty " hero who maintains his " Swift Death to Evil " policy and does not become friendly with Kenshin 's group , being rather aloof to them . Hajime has no specific model for his design . Since Watsuki intended for the character Sait? to be a villain , he made the character 's face " villain @-@ ish . "

Watsuki considers Sait? as the " curse " of the villains in the series since he defeats the enemies who consider themselves the strongest . Watsuki came up with the idea of the Gatotsu sword technique that Sait? uses in the series from the fact that the historical figure 's favorite move was the " left single @-@ handed thrust , " or hirazuki , a technique mainly for slashing downward , stabbing , and thrusts . Watsuki gave Sait? 's left @-@ handed technique the name " Gatotsu " to fit with the action comic theme .

In July 2006 , the Japanese publishers of Rurouni Kenshin released the kanzenban edition . In the sixth kanzenban volume , Watsuki included a draft page featuring a redesigned appearance of Sait? 's character .

In the anime adaptation of Rurouni Kenshin , Watsuki 's designs of Sait? were combined with the talents of voice actor Hirotaka Suzuoki , who also voiced Sait? in the original video animations and Rurouni Kenshin : The Motion Picture . However , due to Suzuoki 's death in 2006 , he was replaced by Ken Narita as the new voice actor for Sait? in the two @-@ part Rurouni Kenshin : New Kyoto Arc movies .

= = Appearances = =

= = = In Rurouni Kenshin = = =

Sait? Hajime , known as the " Mibu no Okami " ( ????? ? , lit . " Wolf of Mibu " ) , is the former

captain of the third squad of the Shinsengumi , a loyalist force of the Tokugawa shogunate . A powerful and ruthless swordsman , Sait? lives by the code " Aku Soku Zan " ( ??? ? , Swift Death to Evil ) , and frequently fights using the Gatotsu , a special left @-@ handed stab variant of the Hirazuki technique of the Shinsengumi , and its different stances . During his time in the Shinsengumi , he was a close associate of fellow Shinsengumi member and first squad captain Okita S?ji , and also developed a rivalry with the pro @-@ Imperialist Himura Kenshin . At the end of the Bakumatsu , the pro @-@ shogunate forces were ultimately defeated and Sait? was forced to go into hiding . He later changed his name to Fujita Gor? ( ?? ?? ) and started working for the Meiji Government as a spy agent . Sait? is also married to a woman named Tokio ( ?? ) , who does not appear in the story .

In his introduction in the series , Sait? attacks and seriously injures Sagara Sanosuke . Sait? has been hired by Shibumi , a corrupt politician , to kill Kenshin ; thus , his attack on Sanosuke serving as a warning to Kenshin . While Kenshin is dueling Shibumi 's assassin Akamatsu Arundo , Sait? appears at the Kamiya dojo , using his alias " Fujita Gor? " , and poses as a police officer who urgently needs to speak with Kenshin . When Kenshin returns , upon recognizing Sait? , he reveals Sait? 's true identity as the former Shinsengumi third squad captain . They fight , and just as they are about to kill each other , ?kubo Toshimichi appears and stops the duel , revealing that Sait? was only testing Kenshin 's abilities to see if he was skilled enough to face Shishio Makoto . Having revealed his true allegiance with ?kubo , Sait? postpones the duel , and leaves to kill Shibumi and Arundo .

Sait? then travels to Kyoto to fight Shishio under government orders . Along with Kenshin and Sanosuke , he assaults Shishio 's battleship , the Purgatory . Accepting Shishio 's challenge to fight on Mount Hiei , Sait? kills Uonuma Usui , one of the Ten Swords , and later ambushes Shishio , almost , but failing to kill him as Shishio had been wearing a hachigane ( iron headband ) . Months later , Sait? is sent to arrest Yukishiro Enishi and he helps Kenshin fight against The Six Comrades , defeating Yatsume Mumi?i . He also fights against the first of the four S? @-@ shin guards of Woo Heishin , Enishi 's second @-@ in @-@ command , and defeats him . Afterwards , Sait? is transferred to work in another location after rejecting the continuation of his duel with Kenshin . Five years after the end of series , it is revealed that Sait? continues to work for the government .

= = = In other media = = =

In the movie Rurouni Kenshin : The Motion Picture , Sait? is assigned by the government to stop the samurai Takimi Shigure from overthrowing the Meiji Government as an act of revenge . He also receives assistance from Himura Kenshin to protect a foreign minister from the rebels . Sait? makes an appearance in the two @-@ part New Kyoto Arc movies , where some of his scenes and fights from the manga series are altered and removed .

Sait? also appears in both of the original video animation ( OVA ) series . In Rurouni Kenshin : Trust & Betrayal , his role and activities as a Shinsengumi captain during the Bakumatsu are depicted . As a result of his involvement in the Ikedaya Affair , he and his Shinsengumi comrades successfully prevent the burning of Kyoto by an extremist faction of the Ishin Shishi . His interactions with Okita S?ji as well as his first encounter with Himura Kenshin are also shown . Sait? has very brief cameo appearance in a flashback scene of Rurouni Kenshin : Reflection .

Sait? is also a playable character in the Rurouni Kenshin video games . He also appears in Jump Super Stars and Jump Ultimate Stars , but not as a playable character .

= = Reception = =

The character of Sait? has been well received by manga readers and as the series continued he went on to become one of the most popular characters among the Rurouni Kenshin reader base , having consistently placed near the top of the Weekly Sh?nen Jump character popularity polls of the series , ranking third in the last two . He has also ranked second in the " Who is the best enemy of Kenshin ? " poll featuring all Kenshin 's opponents . Two polls by the official Rurouni Kenshin anime

featured Saitō as one of the series ' most popular characters . In the " Favorite Character Then " poll , Saitō was ranked third , while in the " Favorite Character Now " he was also placed third . Saitō 's design initially received negative feedback from Shinsengumi fans who believed that Saitō had a more handsome face than the face Watsuki used . Watsuki also recalled that one of the complaints criticized Saitō 's selling of " Ishida powdered medicine " from the Hijikata family . Later , Watsuki was pleased with the fact that Saitō 's popularity with fans increased as the story progressed . A plethora of merchandise have been released in Saitō 's likeness including figurines , keychains and wall scroll posters .

Several anime and manga publications have provided praise for Saitō . His fight scenes in the series , in particular , have also been acclaimed . While reviewing the volume 7 from the manga , Mania Entertainment writer Megan Lavey applauded the fight between Himura Kenshin and Saito Hajime at the Kamiya Dojo as the " high spot of the [ Kyoto Arc ] high spot " . In the volume 14 review for the manga , Lavey described the end of the fight between Saitō and Usui as " very gruesome and not for the faint of heart " . In the DVD volume 7 review for the anime , Mania Entertainment 's Chris Beveridge described the fight scene between Saitō and Kenshin as " definitely choreographed well " . He praised " the viciousness in the attacks , masked under their cold calculating facade " as being " wonderfully done , providing a real feel for these ultimate killers " . His appearance in the OVAs has also received praise . Mike Crandol of Anime News Network states that during the character 's brief appearances in the Rurouni Kenshin : Reflection OVA series , he appears to be " truly menacing . " Mark A. Grey of Anime News Network said that the song " Hoeru Miburo ( Howling Wolf of Mibu ) " in the anime series " perfectly " represents the character .