

Shinsengumi: In Fact and Fiction



(Shinsengumi Banner – Character means Makoto: Truth, Sincere)

By Mike Wagner

Asian Studies Major



(Middle Left to Bottom Right: Kondō, Hijikata, Okita, Nagakura, Saitō)



(LEFT)Saitô Hajime from Rurouni Kenshin (Center right) Kondô, Hijikata, Okita and Ichimura from Peacemaker Kurogane



*(Bottom Left) Gohatto Japanese Film Poster
(Bottom Center) Shinsengumi TV Show
(Bottom Right) Mibu Gishi Den*

(1st page Top Center from Ridgeback Press.com, Middle Left from Ridgeback Press.com, Middle Center from Hijikata Toshizô Museum, Middle Right and Bottom Left from The Bakumatsu, Bottom Right from Wikipedia.org)

(2nd page: Top Left from Anime Galleries, Top Right Photo courtesy of ADV Films, and Bottom Left from Cartelia.net, Bottom Center from CD Japan and Bottom Right from CD Japan)

Dedicated to the Shinsengumi

Acknowledgements:

There are many thanks here, first to Shawn for first getting me interested in *Rurouni Kenshin* in 1998. Second, to the cast and crew of the *Rurouni Kenshin* anim  series on TV: without this show, I wouldn't have been introduced to Hajime Sait . I thank Watsuki Nobuhiro, the original creator of the manga series (in addition to the staff of the manga series) of *Rurouni Kenshin*, for without him, this thesis wouldn't have been possible. I also thank the cast and crew of *Peacemaker Kurogane* anim  for furthering my understanding of the Shinsengumi before the Meiji Era. I also thank Chrono Nanae, the original creator of the *Peacemaker Kurogane* manga series, for without him this thesis would not have been possible. I thank ADV Films' Kristen for giving me permission to use *Peacemaker* pictures. I thank also Wikipedia for addition information on the Shinsengumi as well as for listing the film *Mibu Gishi Den* for more source material. I thank Colin Skurnik from The DVDtective store in Boulder for carrying *Mibu Gishi Den* and other valuable Japanese films and anim . I also thank Professor Nakagawa Shigemi of Japanese Literature at Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto for recommending *Gohatto* to me, and for keeping my interest active in *Rurouni Kenshin*. I thank Laurel Rodd of the University of Colorado for being a great editor and supervisor of this document. I also thank Ridgeback Press and Romulus Hillsborough for making *Shinsengumi: The Samurai's Last Corps*, a biographical book on the Shinsengumi which was vital to my research on factual information. And lastly, thanks to the Shinsengumi, for it has been a great journey chronicling their actual history and the wonderful interpretations that keep them alive this very day.

Shinsengumi: In Fact and Fiction by Mike Wagner

This paper will go into the factual and fictional aspects of the Shinsengumi, an integral part of Japanese history. After a historical overview, I will address animation and fictional books to see how the members of the Shinsengumi have been portrayed in pop culture and modern forms of media entertainment.

The Shinsengumi were a group of very powerful swordsmen who were formed by the Tokugawa government to protect their towns from the imperialists (those who wanted to see the imperial line restored and an imperial style government re-established). Formed near the end of the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868 during the period known as the bakumatsu, end of the bakufu) they not only fought the revolutionaries who wanted to bring down the bakufu (often called Shogunate in English), but they also were assigned by the Tokugawa bakufu to protect the people of Japan and take on corruption wherever it was found. The Tokugawa bakufu was a system of government that was in existence from 1603 to 1868. The leader of the bakufu was called the Shogun, while his subordinate leaders were called daimyo; they were the defacto rulers of Japan, although the Imperial court continued in existence. This paper will focus on the most famous of the Shinsengumi branches, the 'Wolves of Mibu' who operated out of Kyoto. They are the most famous of all the branches. The literal meaning of the name Shinsengumi in English, as translated by Romulus Hillsborough, is 'newly selected corps' (Hillsborough 1), a name which reflects how fast the Shinsengumi were created.

The Shinsengumi were formed about a decade after Matthew Perry's voyage to Japan (1853) to end its isolation from the rest of the world (Hillsborough 5). The predecessors to the Shinsengumi were called the Rôshigumi or the Rôshi Corps. They were rônin who were hired to start suppressing the rebellion that began in Kyoto. Rôshi was an elegant term used by the authorities in place of the word rônin (samurai without a master) (Hillsborough 13). This is because rônin were not regarded highly since they were without a master to serve. Therefore the authorities gave them the name rôshi as a reflection of a higher status and a reflection of their important duty in Kyoto. The Shinsengumi was created in 1862 by leaders in the bakufu to help Lord Matsudaira Katamori protect Kyoto and its people from the imperialists (Hillsborough 12-13). After recruiting hundreds of rônin and patriots, one of their leaders, Kiyokawa Hachirô established a headquarters in the outskirts of the village of Mibu at the Shintokuji Temple. They were slandered by the local populace at first by being called 'Mibu Rôshi' and later the 'Wolves of Mibu.' They were called 'Mibu Rôshi' because their clothes were shabby and not beautiful since the group wasn't rich. This is because they were from the village of Mibu and also since some people didn't care about the difference between rôshi and rônin status. They also didn't wear their family crests either. They were also called 'Wolves of Mibu' because some of the members would extort money from the merchant class and violated local people (Hillsborough 16). At first the Shinsengumi considered these terms as slander, but it grew on them, and they took both names as a symbol of pride. This is because wolves are powerful creatures that are courageous, filled with pride, and efficient hunters in their territory. This analogy would also be used in fiction more than a hundred years later.

However, Kiyokawa Hachirô faked his loyalty to the Rôshi Corps in order to create the Rôshi Corps solely for the purpose of undermining the shogun's foreign policy dealings and to trick the Rôshi Corps into doing acts of terrorism. He eventually revealed his plan on February 13, 1863, and stated that his followers now had to serve the emperor. Kiyokawa Hachirô was thus revealed as one of the revolutionaries who wanted the imperialist system restored. He wanted supporters to send a letter from various members of the corps to get the bakufu to return to the ways of an imperialist system. The bakufu was shocked and angry. They pondered destroying Kiyokawa Hachirô, but decided not to because they wanted to get his soldiers contained and back to the fold first. He was assassinated in 1862, though, for wanting to wage war against foreign ships in Yokohama (Hillsborough 17-19). Thirteen members of the Rôshi Corps who were loyal the entire time to the bakufu joined officially in the effort to preserve the bakufu (Hillsborough 18).

In 1863 the Shinsengumi was formed by these members. The original leaders of the Shinsengumi were Kondô Isami, Serizawa Kamo, and Nishiki Shinmi (Hillsborough 25). The Shinsengumi ranks became massive when they stopped the imperialists from burning Kyoto to the ground in 1864, an event called the Ikedaya Affair. The Shinsengumi suffered only one death and Kyoto was left untouched.

The Shinsengumi became a structured hierarchy (which originally consisted of the 13 members of the Rôshi Corps that defected to the side of the bakufu); it had a Commander (Kondô Isami), two Vice Commanders (Hijikata Toshizô and Yamanami Keisuke) and a Military Advisor (Kashitarô Itô). In addition there were ten Captains. They were: Okita Sôji (First Captain), Nagakura Shinpachi (Second Captain), Saitô

Hajime (Third Captain), Matsubara Chûji (Fourth Captain), Takeda Kanryûsai (Fifth Captain), Inoue Genzaburô (Sixth Captain), Tani Sanjûrô (Seventh Captain), Tôdô Heisuke (Eighth Captain), Suzuki Mikisaburô (Ninth Captain), and last but not least, Harada Sanosuke (Tenth Captain). The Shinsengumi like any regiment had spies. They were Shimada Kai and Yamazaki Susumu (Hillsborough 74; *Shinsengumi* Wikipedia.org).

The Commander Kondô Isami was born October 9, 1834, and was the youngest son of a wealthy family of peasants in the village of Kamiishihara, west of Edo (presently known as Tokyo). His birth name was Miyagawa Katsugorô. His mother died early on and his father taught him much in the way of literature and got Kondô Shusuke (a fencing instructor at Kondô's dôjô called the Shieikan) to teach his sons kenjutsu. Kondô had a vested interest in this. It was evident by his training that he intentionally wanted to be vigorous, and he was very skilled not just in the dôjô but outside of it.

This was based on the fact Kondô Isami even stopped robbers from entering his house based on early teachings from his master, Kondô Shusuke (Hillsborough 23). Kondô Isami aspired to be a samurai and was more than willing to die on the battlefield if need be. But the problem was that he was not of samurai birth (Hillsborough 22). Later on he was adopted by Kondô Shusuke. Adopted by a samurai Kondô Isami got his wish to become a samurai (Hillsborough 23). Kondô Isami took over Kondô Shusuke's Shieikan fencing school in Edo when Shusuke retired (Hillsborough 24). It became huge, but when he was invited to join the Rôshi Corps, he did so and closed the Shieikan (Hillsborough pg. 25).

Toshizô Hijikata was the son of a wealthy peasant from the area known as Tama, the same region Kondô was from. He was a close friend and confidant of Kondô. Those in the Shinsengumi gave him the nickname “demon commander.” He was unusually tall (Hillsborough 25). An orphan since his parents died, he was raised by siblings. Being gifted with a bow and arrow cemented his belief that he wanted to become a samurai. He too was an apprentice of Kondô Shusuke. Later he did become a member of the Shieikan in 1859. After the Shieikan was closed by Kondô Isami, he too would become a member of the Rôshi Corps (Hillsborough 26, 28).

He was also fond of haiku and wrote many which are currently in a museum in which is dedicated to him. He wrote under the name Hôgyoku (Hillsborough 26). A gentleman without his sword, he easily became like a demon (hence the nickname “demon commander”) in battle. He had a high record of kills during his years of service in the Shinsengumi (Hillsborough 28). He had a page by the name of Ichimura Tetsunosuke who joined the Shinsengumi in 1867 (Hillsborough 173).

Yamanami Keisuke, born in 1833, was slightly older than Kondô and was the son of a chief fencing instructor. He challenged the sword master who was heir of the Shieikan to a match. After being defeated, he decided to join the Shieikan. He was also one of the assistant instructors of the Shieikan, along with Hijikata and Okita (Hillsborough 29).

Serizawa Kamo was born in 1830 to a low ranking but wealthy samurai family. Skilled with a sword, he was a murderer and violated women earlier on. He raped three maids at his family’s home in his youth. During his service with the Tengu Party (an extremist anti-foreigner group) he murdered three of his subordinates for minor offenses.

He was sentenced to death but freed by the bakufu to recruit men for the Rôshi Corps. He had affairs with many men's wives not too long after his new-found power (becoming a recruiter of the Rôshi Corp) was given to him (Hillsborough 31; *Serizawa Kamo* Wikipedia.org). He also raped a woman not long after in his hometown of Mito. He contracted syphilis. He also murdered a tiger at a local circus (Hillsborough 32). His criminal actions divided the Shinsengumi into two factions: one for Serizawa, the other for Kondô (Hillsborough 32).

Okita Sôji was a child prodigy of swordsmanship, born in 1844 in Edo. His father was Shirakawa Han, a samurai, in service of a daimyô who was a retainer of the shogun at that time. His parents died when he was a child, so he was taken in by the Shieikan. He regarded Kondô Isami as an older brother. His talent for swordsmanship became evident early in his career. He started by defeating the fencing instructor of the Lord of Shirakawa. At the age of 15 he became the assistant instructor at the Shieikan. He taught not only in Edo, but in other cities as well. When Kondô Isami became the master of the Shieikan, Okita was a natural choice as head of the dôjô (martial arts training hall) (Hillsborough 28-29).

Nakagura Shinpachi was born in 1839 in Edo. He was the only son in his family, a son of a well-ranked samurai of the Matsumae Han (a samurai clan). He began studying kenjutsu, and went on to study the style of Shinto Munen from his father's instructor. He eventually wandered to different dôjô's to test his abilities. Eventually he returned to Edo to be an assistant instructor of the Hokushin Itto style (a form of Kenjutsu, art of the sword). This was around the time that he learned of Kondô Isami.

Although he was never part of the Shieikan, it was at his urging that Kondô and those he knew to join the Rôshi Corps (Hillsborough 29).

Saitô Hajime was born in 1844, the same year as Okita and Tôdô. Like them, he was young and talented. He was unusually tall, being 5 feet 11 inches. Like Nakaguri, he was born in Edo. He was the son of a retainer of the Matsudaira of the Akashi Han. He was never a part of the Rôshi Corps, but he was persuaded by his friends to join the Shinsengumi. He along with Tôdô and Okita were the youngest and most powerful swordsmen of the Shinsengumi (Hillsborough. 30). He was also left handed, which made him a devastating opponent because of his powerful left handed thrust attack. The actual name of that attack is unknown but Watsuki Nobuhiro later named it Gatotsu in *Rurouni Kenshin* and then it caught on (*Saitô Hajime* Wikipedia.org).

Inoue Genzaburô was born in 1829 in Hino. He was the fourth son of a Tokugawa samurai who served the Shogun as a police officer. His father encouraged his sons to get into the martial arts. Genzaburô was the oldest of the Shieikan's eight swordsmen to enlist in the Rôshi Corps (Hillsborough pg. 29).

Tôdô Heisuke was born in 1844. He claimed he was the illegitimate son of the Lord Tsu Han, though there are no records to validate this. However, what is known is that he was a rônin. He also earned a high rank (called mokuroku), in the Hokushin Ittô style of swordsmanship at the famous Chiba Dôjô. He eventually became an apprentice at the Shieikan. He joined the Rôshi Corps the same year that Okita Sôji did, at the age of 19 (Hillsborough 30).

Harada Sanosuke was born in 1840 in Matsuyama Han. He was a daimyô (feudal lord) who was ranked high. His land was in Iyo, a province of Shikoku, the smallest of

the four major islands of Japan. He traveled to Kondô's dôjô, and there he used his mastery of yarijustu (art of the spear). He did at one time attempt seppuku, but failed in the attempt. His scar from that became his family crest (Hillsborough 30).

The Shinsengumi didn't have permission at first to kill their foes, but they did have authority to patrol Kyoto day and night (Hillsborough 21). The Shinsengumi, like any organization, had rules to follow. There were eight of them, and primarily these were rules that prohibited certain actions. The first one was you could not deviate from Bushidô (the code of the samurai). The second one was you could not leave the Shinsengumi. The third: you could not raise money privately. The fourth: you could not participate in a lawsuit brought by another member of the group. You also, fifth, could not engage in private grudges or battles. The sixth rule was if a leader was killed or mortally wounded, all the members of the unit must fight and die on the site where this happened. The seventh rule was that even in a battle where casualties were really high, you couldn't retrieve the bodies, except that of the leader of the unit. The last rule was that if a Shinsengumi member started a fight with a stranger, whether on duty or not, and ran away, he was to commit seppuku immediately. It is not known who made these rules. Some fiction states that it was Isami Kondô or possibly Kamo Serizawa. Some also speculate it was Toshizô Hijikata, based on his strict demeanor. The rules of the Shinsengumi were strictly enforced, and many took their lives for breaking the rules or for being spies (*Shinsengumi* Wikipedia.org).

A notable aspect of the Shinsengumi was that the Shinsengumi allowed those of non-samurai birth to join. During the Tokugawa Era, you had to be descended from the samurai class to be in the samurai class. The Shinsengumi was not concerned with birth,

but with finding great warriors for its ranks. And since the samurai were highly regarded during this time, joining the Shinsengumi was an ideal choice for those who were not descended from samurai but wanted to take part in Tokugawa era politics and affairs. Shinsengumi uniforms were unique among the bakufu's warriors. They wore white headbands, grey or black hakama (divided skirt), and a blue kimono with white mountain-like patterns at the end of the sleeves and the bottom. As a result, no one could mistake these warriors for any other warriors of the bakufu (*Shinsengumi* Wikipedia.org).

As stated above, their numbers swelled to massive proportions after the famous, Ikedaya Incident. This took place on June 5, 1864, (Hillsborough 76-77) when the Shinsengumi sneaked into the Ikedaya Inn, where they were going to ambush the Imperialists who planned to burn down the Imperial Palace, kidnap the Emperor, defeat all opposition, and restore imperial order to Japan (Hillsborough 71). The Shinsengumi operatives: Okita, Nagakura, Inoue, Harada, and Takeda (who later was discovered to be a traitor) found out this information by capturing the owner (suspected to be an Imperialist) of a shop by the name of Masu'ya (Hillsborough 74). Furukada Shuntarô was interrogated by Hijikata. After a lengthy torturous interrogation, Furukada finally gave in and told them the plans to burn down the Imperial Palace and kidnap the Emperor (Hillsborough 75). This allowed the Shinsengumi to do a sneak attack on the Imperialists at the Ikedaya Inn and stop their plans of burning down the Imperial Palace. This was also the occasion when Okita was revealed to have tuberculosis, as he collapsed during the battle (Hillsborough 78). As some analysts and Nakagura himself pointed out, the Bakufu's reign lasted longer because of the Shinsengumi's successful victory at the Ikedaya (Hillsborough 81-82).

So what happened to the Shinsengumi? Although they fought bravely for what they believed in, which was for the preservation of the Bakufu and their own way of life as well as for the people of Japan, they were defeated by the Imperialists who would restore the Imperial line after a thousand years during which the emperor had been controlled by regents or the Shogun. As for its members and what happened to them, here are details about what happened to the captains and influential members of the Shinsengumi.

Yamanami Heisuke became dissatisfied with what the leaders of the Shinsengumi (Kondô and Hijikata) stood for and believed that they deviated from the Shinsengumi's original values (Hillsborough 41). He deserted the Shinsengumi briefly. The circumstances that led to his seppuku are unclear, but what is known is that he committed seppuku in 1865. Some speculate that it was because that Kondô and Hijikata had the Mibu headquarters of the Shinsengumi relocated to the Nishihonganji Temple. Further speculations say that relocation was met with opposition by the temple's Buddhist monks and Yamanami himself. Kondô and Hijikata ignored the protests by the monks and Yamanami. Because of all of this, Yamanami defected by fleeing to the town of Otsu. When Okita Sôji was assigned to apprehend him, Yamanami strangely surrendered to Okita without a fight. He returned without a fight because he accepted his fate of betraying the Shinsengumi. Upon his return to Shinsengumi Headquarters, he was ordered to commit seppuku by Kondô. Again besides history saying he did commit seppuku this is all speculation (Hillsborough 42-43).

Kondô Isami reformed the Shinsengumi time and again. One of these incarnations was called Kôyôchinbutai (which Romulus Hillsborough translated it to be

‘Pacification Corps’), which was formed in February of 1868. Kondô adopted the alias Okubô Yamato at this time (Hillsborough 148). He was eventually apprehended (Hillsborough 159-160). Brought to court, he was sentenced to be executed by Imperialists who wanted revenge against him for causing the deaths of so many of their men, and he was executed in April 25, 1868 (Hillsborough 163). His head was put on display by the Imperialists to shame him, while those who regarded him as a hero buried his body in Ryûgenji temple (Hillsborough 164-165).

Hijikata Toshizô, who was shot in the foot in April of 1868, would lead the Shinsengumi on, even after the death of Kondô Isami. As a result, Hijikata was no longer Vice Commander of the Shinsengumi, but the leader (Hillsborough 162). With his new commander Otori Keisuke, Hijikata would amass a force of 2,300 troops and lead the Shinsengumi into further battles to defeat the Imperialists. However, he was killed in battle at Hakodate on May 11, 1869, at the age of 34 (Hillsborough 169-170, 173-174). There is a museum dedicated to him in Hino City (in Tokyo) that has his haiku and other forms of literature about him (Hijikata Toshizô Museum Site).

Ichimura Tetsunosuke, Hijikata’s page who joined the Shinsengumi in 1867, was ordered by Hijikata to leave the last battlefield at Hakodate where the Shinsengumi fought. At first he protested, but Hijikata was adamant about him leaving for Yokohama to save his life so he obeyed (Hillsborough 173). Ichimura learned of his master’s death while on his voyage to Yokohama. He delivered mementos of Hijikata to his master’s brother-in-law Satô Hikogorô (Hillsborough 174). Ichimura thus ensured a memorial would be built in a successful attempt to clear Hijikata’s and Kondô’s names as traitors to Japan (Hillsborough 181-182).

Okita Sôji, loyal to the Shinsengumi, fought in battles time and time again. When his tuberculosis was bad enough he went in 1868 to live in a private residence, where he thought he was recovering from his fatal illness. His resolve to destroy the enemies of the Shinsengumi was still strong, regardless of his condition. He died of tuberculosis on May 30, 1868, at the age of 25 (Hillsborough 167-168).

After leaving Kondô and Hijikata, Nagakura Shinpachi created (with the help of Harada Sanosuke) an oppositionist militia called Seikyôtai. At the end of the Meiji Restoration, he returned to his ancestral lands in Ezo. After that he married the daughter of the doctor of the former lord of the land Matsumae in Ezo. He took the last name of his wife, Sugimara. Still a warrior, he soon became a chief kenjutsu instructor at a prison. In 1876 near Kondô's execution site he created a shrine that was dedicated to Kondô Isami, Hijikata Toshizô, and the Shinsengumi warriors who died in combat (Hillsborough 183). He died of natural causes in 1915. However two years prior to his death, he gave a news reporter complete information about the Shinsengumi, which was published in the Hotaru Shinbun (Hotaru Newspaper) in 1913. His written memoirs were lost until 1998 when they could finally be available for all to see (Hillsborough 184).

Saitô Hajime fought to the bitter end for the Shinsengumi. He fought to defend Aizu castle, which eventually fell to the Imperialists in September 1868 (Hillsborough 167, 184-185). After the fall of Aizu castle and of the Shinsengumi, he knew that the Imperialists were going to win the war (Hillsborough 184-185). So in a controversial move he joined the side of the Imperialists under a false name to end the war and bring peace to Japan. During the Meiji Era, he reappeared using a false name, Gôrô Fujita, and became a police officer (still dedicated to protecting the innocent and combating

corruption) in 1872. Before this he married a daughter of a former high ranking retainer of the Lord of Aizu. In his elder years he became a museum guard. He died of a stomach ulcer in 1915 at the age of 72. Proud even in death, he defied death by sitting upright when he died (Hillsborough 184-185).

The fifth captain, Takeda Kanryûsai, was killed in 1867, not only because he was an inefficient and arrogant leader and his tactics were outdated, but also because, as was later discovered by Kondô Isam to be a traitor. Takeda joined the Imperialists, and traveled to the Imperialist Satsuma clan mansion in Fushimi. Because of this Kondô had Saitô assassinate Takeda after a farewell party for him (Hillsborough 122-123).

Inoue Genzaburô, sixth captain and one of the founding members of the Shinsengumi, was killed on January 3, 1868, in the battle at Toba-Fushimi. He died fighting the well-armed Imperialist Satsuma clan, who were using artillery (Hillsborough 142).

Tôdô Heisuke, the eighth captain, was killed at the street intersection Aburakoji-Shichijô in Kyoto on November 18, 1867. This is because he was with the Kôdaji Faction, who were revealed by Saitô to be traitors to the Shinsengumi. First Itô Kashitarô was assassinated in the same intersection, and Kondô planned on sparing Tôdô's life. However, when Tôdô (accompanied by Shinohara Yasunoshin and Suzuki Mikisaburô) came to the spot where Itô Kashitarô was killed, the Shinsengumi attacked. Since Tôdô's life was supposed to have been spared, he may have been killed on purpose or it may have been an accident (Hillsborough 124-125).

Suzuki Mikisaburô, the ninth captain, was the younger brother of the traitorous Itô Kashitarô. With the remnants of the Kôdaji Faction of the Shinsengumi (which turned

traitor), he tried to assassinate Kondô Isami in late December of 1867 (Hillsborough 191, 140). He may have been one of the Imperialist men who fled but committed seppuku the following day (Hillsborough 141).

Harada Sanosuke, the tenth captain, helped form the Seikyotai (and he and Nagakura were Vice Commanders). He went back to Edo after Edo Castle fell and the Seikyôtai went north. In May he joined the Shogitai (which Hillsborough translates as ‘Corps of Clear Loyalty’ was an oppositionist corps based in Ueno) in a battle at Ueno (in northeastern Edo where the last Tokugawa Shogun, Yoshinobu, was holed up. He died in that conflict (Hillsborough 196, 198, 183).

Yamazaki Susumu was active until the battle at Toba-Fushimi. On January 3, 1868, he was shot in battle along with Inoue Genzaburô and thirty other veterans (Hillsborough 142).

Although the Shinsengumi were defeated in the Meiji Restoration, they would never be forgotten. Thanks to Ichimura Tetsunosuke, Nakagura Shinpachi, Hajime Saitô, and Satô Hikogorô, the Shinsengumi were honored with monuments and information about them was spread. Through this, new legends about them would eventually appear almost 140 years later.

The Shinsengumi would be brought to life with the public and in pop culture with a variety of fictional sources. One of them would be in the series *Rurouni Kenshin* (an animé (a Japanese animated series) which debuted in 1996 in Japan. It was later brought to the United States in 2000. It was based on the manga (Japanese comic book) series by Watsuki Nobuhiro. Another one that was released in 1999 was Oshima Nagisa’s film *Gohattô* (English Title: *Taboo*) that was released in 1999. Another fictional title that was

released in 1999 was *Peacemaker Kurogane*. It was by Chrono Nanae, and was turned into an anim  and released in Japan in 2003 and released in the United States in 2004. Another fictional source was a film called *Mibu gishi den* (English title: When the last sword is drawn), that was released in 2003 in Japan. It was by the director Takita Y jiro. Another series released in 2004 on NHK was called *Shinsengumi*. It was a weekly series that lasted for a year that told about the group and was written by Mitani Koki. These will be discussed below in the order introduced.

Rurouni Kenshin

Rurouni Kenshin takes place during the tenth year of the Meiji Era (1879). It has to do with a rurouni (wanderer) by the name of Kenshin Himura who was once known as Hittikori Batt sai (Imperialist Assassin). Once an Imperialist, now a decade later after the Imperialists have won the war, he is dedicated to protecting the people of Japan and swearing never to kill again.

Beginning in the seventh volume, the series shows Sait 's connection with the main character Kenshin Himura during the bakumatsu. It accurately portrays the war between the Imperialists and the Shinsengumi and the way Tokugawa Bakufu was brought to an end in Kyoto. It also accurately portrays Okita S ji as being sick with tuberculosis near the end of the bakumatsu. However, in *Rurouni Kenshin*, Sait  knows Okita is sick and tells Okita that he will fight Batt sai in his place. The series is accurate in describing Sait  as extremely tall, taller than his companions in the saga. (He was 5'11" in real life, after all, which is abnormally tall for a Japanese man). In this part of

the series of *Rurouni Kenshin* (which takes place in the Meiji Era), he wears a police uniform which is also accurate since he was a police officer. He is depicted as having short hair, which follows the Meiji Era fashion, since topknots were no longer in style since the Japanese were incorporating Western ideas and customs to modernize. As in real life, he takes the name Gôrô Fujita after the bakumatsu. He travels to Tokyo in the seventh installment of the series, which is close to real life since he was primarily in Tokyo after the war. His primary interest in Kenshin is that he must join forces with him to defeat the new Battôsai, Shishio Makoto. Shishio Makoto is a madman who along with his army called the Juppongatana (translated as the “Ten Swords” since it is a group led by ten generals), want to take over Japan. However, many new interpretations of Saitô as well as the Shinsengumi are presented in this series, and new legends were formed by *Rurouni Kenshin*.

The Shinsengumi, as seen in the character Kenshin Himura, is a powerful fighting force, and the Captains are extremely honorable. And Kenshin is even saddened that most of the Captains are dead. Another interesting change is that Okita Sôji is portrayed as being more short than most of the Shinsengumi members. Saitô Hajime had a legendary thrust attack that he did with his left hand since he was a left handed swordsman. Until *Rurouni Kenshin*, there was no name for it on historical record. So Watsuki Nobuhiro, in honor of Saitô, decided to give it a name. The name was Gatotsu, meaning “Fang Pierce.” It is an apt name since in this series and in real life he was known as a ‘Wolf of Mibu,’ like all the members of the Shinsengumi. “Fang pierce” suggests the metaphor of a wolf’s fangs biting into its prey. This analogy is perfect for this legendary move that Saitô created and mastered (Volume Seven *Rurouni Kenshin*). The animé also gives Saitô four

types of Gatotsu moves. The first stance is the standard Gatotsu attack. The second stance thrusts the sword down diagonally. The third stance repels attacks that come from above. And the final stance uses only the upper body's strength, and it is done so close to the target that there is no room for the user to move. Saitô calls this last stance, the Zero Stance. He uses all four stances against one of his deadliest enemies in *Rurouni Kenshin*, Usui Uonuma, the second most powerful generals of the Shishio Makoto's army (Volume Twelve *Rurouni Kenshin*). Saitô, in the animé series even has the power to use the Gatotsu without a sword allowing him to do a powerful thrust left punch attack (Volume Seven *Rurouni Kenshin*). And Saitô, being a Wolf of Mibu, uses the full fury of the wolf in the final battle against Shishio (Volume 14 *Rurouni Kenshin*).

The interpretation of Saitô's personality is quite fascinating in *Rurouni Kenshin*. The main character Kenshin once thought of Saitô as an honorable man, but is shocked when Saitô's personality changes in the Meiji Era. Saitô is still dedicated to justice and protecting the innocent; however, he is portrayed in the Meiji as a different man. As the title of the seventh installment, "Shadow of the Wolf", indicated, he stays in the shadows and plots his plans. He uses deception, lies, and infiltration tactics in order to defeat those who are responsible for trying to assassinate Kenshin. However, as he tells Kenshin, he still follows the code that not only the Shinsengumi followed but the Imperialists as well. This was "Aku Soku Zan" which is translated as "Slay Evil Immediately". He uses these methods in his mission for Okubo Toshimichi, in order to test Kenshin and his companions to see if they are up to the task of stopping the madman Shishio Makoto.

In the animé and manga, Saitô serves in Kyoto primarily. But as in real life he does go to Tokyo in the seventh volume as a part of his law enforcement duties. He is sarcastic, cynical, and doesn't care for morons. Although he does show compassion, caring, and is even willing to go out on a limb for someone, he hides his emotions, making it seem that the mission and the cause are more important than individuals. However, to his foes he shows no pity, as Usui finds out when Saitô defeats him. As a result, Kenshin's companions first hate him, but over time they accept him for who he is and care about him and his safety as the saga goes on. He is shown as having yellow eyes. This is done because wolves have similar-colored eyes as adults, and since he was a 'Wolf of Mibu,' it made sense for Watsuki to make him have the attributes of wolves (Volume Seven, Twelve *Rurouni Kenshin*).

The *Rurouni Kenshin* series portrays Saitô as the last survivor of the Shinsengumi. In real life, as already stated, there were three survivors: Nagakura Shinpachi, Saitô Hajime, and the spy Shimada Kai (Hillsborough 183-185). Saitô plays an integral part in the series as he goes with Kenshin's companions to do battle with Shishio Makoto and the Juppongatana who killed the last of the major leaders of the Meiji Restoration, Okubo Toshimichi, and fights to destroy this evil threat that planned to take over Japan (called the Kyoto Arc). In the animé, after the defeat of Shishio, he returns to his post in Kyoto, but hides his presence so Kenshin and his friends will not see him again (Volume 14 *Rurouni Kenshin*). In the manga after the Kyoto Arc although he disappears for a time, he returns to help Kenshin and his friends stop a madman from Kenshin's past.

Peacemaker Kurogane

Peacemaker Kurogane wasn't the first or the last series to portray the Shinsengumi in a different light. *Peacemaker Kurogane* by Chrono Nanae manga in 1999, later an anim  portrays them not just as brave warriors, but also portrays their willingness to become like demons who gave away their humanity to fight for what they believed. The leader and vice commanders as well as captains are mostly depicted in the series. And for the first time, this series brought into the limelight Hijikata's page Ichimura Tetsunosuke. Ichimura in this series joined the Shinsengumi in 1863, long before the Ikedaya Inn Incident. However, the characterizations of the leader, vice-commanders, and captains of the Shinsengumi would evolve and new legends be created thanks to *Peacemaker Kurogane*.

Ichimura Tetsunosuke was the page of Hijikata, but a new legend was created about him in *Peacemaker Kurogane*. In this series he joins the Shinsengumi at the age of 15. In *Peacemaker Kurogane*, he is really short and looks younger. He joins the Shinsengumi not just because his brother Tatsunosuke did, but because he wants revenge against the man who killed his parents (Volume One *Peacemaker*). As time goes on he makes friends with everyone in the Shinsengumi. He ultimately makes friends with Yamazaki Susumu after he also restores the humanity of Yamazaki Susumu. This is because Yamazaki's sister Ayumu's last wish in life was to have him be friends with her brother. This was because Yamazaki forsook all emotions and his life when he became a spy for the Shinsengumi (Volume Six *Peacemaker*). Although he originally wants revenge, he forsakes that in the end. His girlfriend Saya wants him to retain his

personality and not do what the Shinsengumi does to enforce the law. He does kill Yoshida, but not out of revenge. He does it in order to save the lives of Okita and himself, for if he didn't kill Yoshida in battle he would have died. Satisfied that justice was upheld in the defeat of Yoshida, he pledges to Saya that he will never kill again (Volume Seven *Peacemaker*).

Kondô Isami in *Peacemaker Kurogane* is kind, gentle, and compassionate towards the Shinsengumi's newest recruit, Ichimura Tetsunosuke. In fact, because of the boy's spirit, he wants him to join (Volume One *Peacemaker*). Much as in real life, he does have mistresses, as Tôdô mentions in Volume Six. In *Peacemaker* Kondô is primarily a diplomat and doesn't engage in battle until the final volume of the animé series which is the entire Ikedaya Incident.

In *Peacemaker Kurogane*, Toshizô Hijikata is called "The Demon Commander" by his peers in the Shinsengumi mainly because, as in real life, he is notorious, not openly compassionate or caring, and really strict. He constantly disciplines Ichimura by having him write the Shinsengumi codes repeatedly and standing guard at night, even if Ichimura has good reason to disobey his orders. Both *Shinsengumi* and *Peacemaker Kurogane* paint him to be a gentleman at times and he proves it by not wanting Ichimura to touch a real sword but just to be his page. This is because he regrets having given Okita his sword to kill in the service of the Shinsengumi (Volume Two *Peacemaker*). And other times, such as in the last volume, he praises Ichimura for bringing good tea to help Okita since it is his first time doing it on the battlefield. He also allows the men to enjoy the Gion Festival with a private celebration for the Shinsengumi at their headquarters, and he is happy that he can relax for once (Volume Seven *Peacemaker*).

Yamanami Heisuke is portrayed as kind and patient as well as a very insightful leader. As in real life he has a strong connection to Kondô Isami (Volume Two *Peacemaker*), but he doesn't agree with Shinsengumi policy as time goes on. In the series *Peacemaker*, this is because he regrets killing Kamo Serizawa on orders of Lord Matsudaira Katamori. However, in real life he wasn't involved in this because Kamo Serizawa was already dead. He doesn't like Hijikata's personality, which he feels hasn't changed over the years, and it has come to the point where he kills soullessly and has lost his humanity almost totally. Hijikata will kill almost anyone. This is why Yamanami requests to become a bookkeeper to the shock of Hijikata. Yamanami also tells Hijikata to destroy him if he became like him (Volume Three *Peacemaker*). In *Peacemaker* he falls in love with a woman (a ninja who serves the Imperialists until she gives it up) by the name of Akesato, who is also a geisha. Yamanami willingly forsakes his sword, and Hijikata accepts this (Volume Six-Seven *Peacemaker*).

In the *Peacemaker Kurogane* manga novels, as in real life, Yamanami forsakes the Shinsengumi briefly. In the *Peacemaker Kurogane* manga novels he leaves Shinsengumi headquarters to meet up with Akesato. Okita Sôji finds him, however in this series: he wants him to come back and promises no harm to him. Even Kondô Isami in this series doesn't want him to commit seppuku, but Yamanami does so in order to prove his point that the Shinsengumi has become something it originally did not intend to become. He also does this to restore Hijikata's humanity. This he does by faking an attack on Hijikata in which Hijikata defends himself and slashes Yamanami in the bowel region. Yamanami wanted in the end have a seppuku ceremony and have Hijikata as the man to initiate it. Okita then finishes the ceremony by mercy killing Yamanami.

Hijikata is shocked that he accidentally killed his own comrade and friend. Feeling remorse, he regains a part of humanity that he had lost (manga Volume Two *Peacemaker*).

The other Shinsengumi leaders in the *Peacemaker* anime have also been given different qualities and new legends. Okita Sôji (First Captain), in *Peacemaker Kurogane* is taller and appears older than his counterpart in *Rurouni Kenshin*. He is portrayed in this version as having feminine qualities. He wears his hair down and his youthful face makes him look feminine. Saitô even makes a teasing comment about his kimono which looks more like a woman's rather than a man's. When he is drunk he tends to have homosexual tendencies. He is kind, caring and gentle to children and to Ichimura Tetsunosuke. He also has a pet pig by the name of Saizô. In the first volume of *Peacemaker* he tells Ichimura that he is a demon's child and shows his true appearance in which his eyes are small and piercing (Volume 1 *Peacemaker*). He always tries to give Ichimura advice and guide him on the right path. In *Peacemaker*, the viewer of the series finds out Okita was a prodigy of the sword early on in life. It is unclear if Okita in real life started his swordsmanship at the age of 9. Okita questions Hijikata's reluctance to hand Ichimura (15 at this time) a sword, since Okita was 9 years old when Hijikata gave him a sword (Volume Two *Peacemaker*). He believes that he is using his sword to defend those he cares about and is willing to be a demon to protect those he cares about. He doesn't care what others call him, whether murderer or Wolf of Mibu. Okita believes that as long as his truth shines, everything in darkness can be peaceful. This means that as long as he is doing what he is dedicated to, the citizens in Japan can be at peace. In this series Okita hides his illness as much as he can. In the final volume he even claims

that he coughed up blood in the battle at Ikedaya because it was an enemy's blood that got in his throat. He has faith that Ichimura could defeat Yoshida Toshimaru and would be a strong person (Volume Three, *Seven Peacemaker*). In the manga novels, he is the one who kills Yoshida Toshimaru (manga Volume 3 *Peacemaker*).

In *Peacemaker* Nakagura Shinpachi is shorter than in real life (just a tad taller than Ichimura) and has red hair. He cares about Ichimura Tetsunosuke as well and often teases him when not giving advice. In one episode he helps Harada Sanosuke make Ichimura realize that it isn't a sword that makes you who you are, it is you and your inner strength of one's personality (Volume Two *Peacemaker*). Nakagura also joins Okita and Harada in stealing Hijikata's haiku to cheer up Tetsunosuke. And when Yamazaki Susumu's sister takes over his position for awhile, Nakagura becomes the substitute cook (Volume Four *Peacemaker*). Nakagura in *Peacemaker* tells the viewer that Kondô's integrity has influenced those with different martial arts styles in the Shinsengumi to communicate and be sociable with each other. He also likes to go to Shimabara with Harada Sanosuke and Tôdô Heisuke (Volume Five *Peacemaker*).

Saitô Hajime is also different in *Peacemaker Kurogane* from *Rurouni Kenshin* and real life. In this series, he has the ability to communicate with dead spirits and knows when they are nearby. In addition he has the ability to read the pasts and possible futures for an individual through the combined use of empathic and psychic powers. And he can also detect magic and knows magic rituals. In fact in one episode he gets so caught up in the visions he sees when analyzing Ichimura that he accidentally knocks Ichimura out (Volume Three *Peacemaker*). He is stoic, patient, reminds Ichimura to follow in his duties, and even shows gratitude when Ichimura is worried about his safety (Volume One

Peacemaker). In *Peacemaker Kurogane*, Saitô is just as tall as his *Rurouni Kenshin* and real life counterparts. He is also left handed and likes soba (buckwheat noodles) in *Peacemaker Kurogane*. However, his eyes are not yellow and wolf-like as in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Just as in *Rurouni Kenshin* he has the ability to hide in shadows and suddenly come out of nowhere to surprise friend or foe. Okita comments in *Peacemaker* that he is ‘dressed ready for a funeral’. He also is the first to realize that Ichimura has an enemy still alive, who was Yoshida, the man who murdered his parents (Volume One *Peacemaker*). At the end of *Peacemaker*, Saitô suddenly appears and congratulates Ichimura Tetsunosuke on defeating his foe from the past, noticing the aura that haunted him was gone (Volume Seven *Peacemaker*).

Tôdô Heisuke is given a different spin as well. Tôdô has a penchant for anything beautiful and makes that abundantly clear when he meets Ichimura for the first time with Harada and Nakagura (Volume 1 *Peacemaker*).

Harada Sanosuke, just as in real life, is a master of the spear. In *Peacemaker*, he is really tall (taller than Saitô!) and muscular (like a bodybuilder). He also tags along with Nakagura and takes direct orders from him. As in real life he committs seppuku and survives the attempt. Harada is loud and comical in *Peacemaker* and provides comic relief. The animé series *Peacemaker Kurogane* has Harada, Tôdô and Nagakura as a troupe of friends that are always together when they go somewhere. Harada in the animé series also tells the viewer that they consider themselves not just as friends, but as brothers even though they were born on different days. And he hopes when they finally die, it will be at the same moment (Volume Five *Peacemaker*).

Yamazaki Susumu in *Peacemaker* is a masterful spy (as in real life). The new qualities in *Peacemaker* give him a new legend as well. He is so skillful in the art of disguise that he makes a convincingly attractive woman when wearing women's garb. Not prone to anger he finally experiences anger when Ichimura interferes in an operation that he is doing (infiltrating the Masu'ya). Okita actually praises Ichimura for being able to make Yamazaki angry (Volume One *Peacemaker*) Yamazaki cares about Ichimura as well but doesn't show it much. What is really fascinating is that it is revealed in this series that Yamazaki is also a member of the famous Oniwabanshû (Oniwaban Group). The Oniwaban Group is a cabal of powerful ninjas and spies. They not only watched over Kyoto, but Edo (Tokyo) and Edo castle as well during the Tokugawa Era. They are a predominate force in the series *Rurouni Kenshin*. His role in *Peacemaker* is reconnaissance, infiltration, but not all-out combat. As it is revealed in the second volume, he is on orders to return to base upon discovery, not to battle with anyone who discovers his presence (Volume Two *Peacemaker*). He also in *Peacemaker* has a sister by the name of Ayumu, who was once the resident cook, who took over Susumu's place as a spy (Volume Four *Peacemaker*). In the manga novels after the Ikedaya Incident, he trains to become a medical doctor (manga novel 3 *Peacemaker*).

It's an important point in the series of *Peacemaker Kurogane*, that although the people in the Shinsengumi have qualities like ordinary people, the ability to love (in the form of friendships, relationships), kindness, goofiness and other normal emotions, the Shinsengumi are portrayed as demon-like warriors who have given up their humanity to battle the Imperialists and to protect the citizens of Japan. The Shinsengumi in *Rurouni Kenshin* are portrayed as a brave brutal military force who fought with passion for their

beliefs and not because they gave away their humanity by becoming demons. However, *Peacemaker Kurogane* does have major battles and incidents that actually occurred in the history of the Shinsengumi and so does *Rurouni Kenshin*. The manga released in the U.S. for the series is the second manga series reflecting the animé's title; however, only 3 novels were released, whereas in Japan there were 5. The *Rurouni Kenshin* manga had more than 20 volumes published.

A lot of actual historical events are changed in *Peacemaker Kurogane* to amplify legends of who the Shinsengumi were and what they did. For example, the Ikedaya Incident in *Peacemaker* comes about because of the brutal death of Yamazaki Susumu's sister Ayumu. Her true identity is discovered by the owner of Masu'ya, a business that secretly housed Imperialists such as Yoshida and Imperialist rōnin (samurai without a master) as well. Furukada Shuntarō orders her to be tortured to death for his amusement (Volume Six *Peacemaker*). Hijikata uses this as the primary reason to invade the Masu'ya and capture Furukada and also to find Yoshida in order to kill him. Hijikata feels remorse for Ayumu's death and feels responsible, in spite of Okita telling him otherwise. Using the information tortured out of Furukada, the Shinsengumi attack the Ikedaya Inn as in real life (Volume 6 *Peacemaker*). *Peacemaker* (the animé) also changed the description of the battle at the Ikedaya which follows these events. Ichimura saves Okita's life when he is incapacitated by his tuberculosis by killing the Imperialist Yoshida Toshimaro (*Peacemaker* Volume Seven). However, in the manga novels, Okita kills Yoshida as in real life.

These were not the first or the last fictional representations of the Shinsengumi that were released.

Gohatto

Oshima Nagisa's film *Gohatto* (English Title: *Taboo*) released just prior to the manga *Peacemaker* series in 1999, is set in the year 1865. The Shinsengumi is looking for more recruits and they enlist a young warrior by the name of Kano. Kano is fearless and handsome, which leads to competition over him as well as to murders within the Shinsengumi. Thus Kano's presence threatens to tear apart the entire Shinsengumi. Most of the leaders of the Shinsengumi are involved in this conflict, including Kondô Isami, Hijikata Toshizô and Okita Sôji. Saitô Hajime and the others are absent from this film.

Mibu Gishi Den

In 2003 a film by the name of *Mibu gishi den* (English title: When the last sword is drawn) was released. It is the story of a doctor who recalls a man his father knew, a man called Kanichirô Yoshimura of the Nanbu clan who forsakes his clan to join the Shinsengumi in order to financially support his family. This film is very historically accurate: Kondô, Hijikata, Okita, Nagakura, and Saitô all are in the film. Nagakura duels with Kanichirô as a part of Shinsengumi initiation. Okita has tuberculosis in the film and it kills him later on after the Ikedaya incident as in real life. Major battles that the Shinsengumi engaged in are in this film, from the Ikedaya Inn to Toba Fushimi. And as in real life, the Shinsengumi visit Shimabara. Saitô in this film is much like his

counterpart in *Rurouni Kenshin*. He is emotionally reserved, sarcastic, shadowy, but compassionate, as he proves later when he tells Kanichiro to leave Toba Fushimi or he will die and when he tells his girlfriend at the Shimabara to flee or she will be killed. He also has his trademark left-handed style and Kanichiro knows about his Gatotsu special attack. Saitô also, as in real life and in *Peacemaker Kurogane*, infiltrates the Kôdaji Faction of the Shinsengumi led by Itô Kashitarô, and of course later defeats him, as in real life. Saitô also makes an appearance in 1899 in the film, which is possible because he was alive until 1915 (*Mibu Gishi Den*). However, there are some differences in this film. For one, uniforms that were standard were black and had mountain-like patterns that were red. In real life, the Shinsengumi uniforms were white instead of black, and the mountain patterns that were red. Okita's hair style is different in this film than in *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Peacemaker*, and *Gohatto*. This is because the look he had in this film was one in which most of the top of the head is shaved. But the stripe of hair on the front of the head, and the topknot remain (*Mibu Gishi Den*).

Shinsengumi (NHK Television Series)

Mibu Gishi Den was not the last work of fiction released in Japan about the Shinsengumi. A series called *Shinsengumi* was aired on the NHK (National Japanese Television) network in 2004. It was a weekly series that lasted for a year and told about the group. It starts with the invasion of the Black Ships of Matthew Perry in 1853 leading up to the formation of the Shinsengumi by Kondô. The *Shinsengumi* television series also shows the formation of the Rôshi Corps. It shows the birth of the Shinsengumi, as well

as the Ikedaya Incident. And one episode deals with Yamanami's deserting the group briefly. The television series *Shinsengumi* also covers the end of the Shinsengumi. There are differences in this version as well, like in the second episode of the show, where Kondô Isami, Hijikata Toshizô returns to Tama and meets Nakagura Shinpachi for the first time. In this episode Nakagura is a bodyguard for the Takimoto family. And a battle ensues to protect the Takimoto family from robbers, which Sanosuke Harada helps defeat the robbers and they all meet for the first time. In episode 4, Yamanami Keisuke meets Kondô for the first time. What is different in the *Shinsengumi* television series as opposed to real life is that in addition to fighting Kondô to join the Shinsengumi, has to also fight Okita as well. In episode 5, Nakagura Shinpachi is hired as an assassin to kill an American by the name of Heuskenm, who Kondô saves not just because he doesn't want Nakagura to become a criminal, but to save Heuskenm's life since Heuskenm loves Japan and understands the concepts of Bushidô. In episode 7 it shows the friendship between Kondô Isami and Sakamotô Ryoma, and how even though they are on opposite sides, they are friends.

Saitô Hajime shows up in episode 15 for the first time and suddenly appears in front of the Rôshi Corps like his fictional shadowy self and joins them. In episode 17, it changes how the divide between Serizawa Kamo's group and Kondô Isami's group begins. At first Kondô Isami trusted Serizawa, until he openly bashes the Mibu Rôshi name (which in real life is a slang term and in this series which the Rôshi Corps consider an honorable name) starts to argue over succession over who should lead. This creates the divide in the television series *Shinsengumi*. However it is different than actual history, since the divide between the groups of Kondô and Serizawa occurred after the

formation of the Shinsengumi. In episode 18, Saitô has an event that he is involved with which is different than in real life, where he attacks a gambling house with former comrades of an unknown origin. In episode 19, Shimada Kai's is introduced for the first time as Nagakura Shinpachi brings Shimada to join the Rôshi Corps as well and he tells Kondô Isami, and Hijikata that he changed his name six times. He reveals his original name was Ogari Minô. Episode 25 also changes the assassination plot of Serizawa Kamo, for it is Hijikata, Yamanami, Okita, and Harada, who kill him. And Saitô and another man protect him originally but in the end lets them kill Serizawa. However, Yamanami and Harada never participated in the assassination, and Saitô was never a part of Serizawa's group. The Shinsengumi in *Shinsengumi* was formed after this assassination of Serizawa, which is also different than actual history. In episode 26, Yamazaki Susumu, and Kanryusai Takeda appear in the show for the first time and the both join the Shinsengumi. In this fictional version of Yamazaki, Yamazaki has the ability of instantly remembering names and faces of those he meets. In episode 27 Okita is asked by one of his comrades to see a doctor and he denies being sick, which he also tells Hijikata the same thing later on in the episode. At this point he has the symptoms of tuberculosis. In episode 27 which the Shinsengumi attack the Ikedaya, Nagakura and Harada are the ones who find out that Okita upon collapsing and coughing up blood, has tuberculosis. When Hijikata and Kondô ask about it, Harada lies and says that he just had a massive fever. In episode 33 Yamanami does commit seppuku for deserting the Shinsengumi briefly. It is different than the *Peacemaker* manga novels because Yamanami meets Akesato at an inn instead of out in the backcountry where he meets her in the *Peacemaker* manga novel series. It is also different in this series, *Shinsengumi*, because he is ordered by Kondô

and Hijikata to commit seppuku. In episode 34 because Yamanami commits seppuku in their headquarters, Hijikata, Okita, Ito and Shimada wanted to move their operations to a new headquarters, to the Nishihoganji Temple, which Nagakura and Harada object to. This is also different than real life, since it is speculated that this was the reason in real life as to why Yamanami briefly deserted the Shinsengumi. Thanks to these new legends created by the show *Shinsengumi*, it was a successful television show that once again created new interpretations of the Shinsengumi and kept them alive once again (<http://nhkshinsengumi.tripod.com/synopsis.html>).

Conclusion

The Shinsengumi were known in the past for their bravery and their dedication to their country, unit, and to innocent civilians, but they have become heroic icons not just to Japanese people, but to people all over the world, as literature and fiction has become more available about them in the past decade. Thanks to new legends from the narratives of *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Peacemaker Kurogane*, and *Mibu Gishi Den*, the Shinsengumi will always be remembered as legends and heroes. This is a very positive thing since they were brave warriors and their fictionalization will make them always remembered in fact and fiction and make what they represented timeless.

Resources:

Chrono Nanae. *Peacemaker Kurogane* Volume 2. Trans. Amy Forsyth.
Texas: ADV, 2004

Chrono Nanae. *Peacemaker Kurogane* Volume 3. Trans. Amy Forsyth.

Texas: ADV, 2005

Rurouni Kenshin: Shadow of the Wolf. Volume 7. Dir. Furuhashi Kazuhiro. Perf. Suzukaze Mayo, Fujitani Miki, Ueda Yûji, Tomînaga Mina, Suzuoki Hirotaka. DVD. Anime Works, 2001

Rurouni Kenshin: Blind Justice. Volume 12. Dir. Furuhashi Kazuhiro. Perf. Suzukaze Mayo, Fujitani Miki, Ueda Yûji, Tomînaga Mina, Suzuoki Hirotaka. DVD. Anime Works, 2001

Rurouni Kenshin: Fire Requiem. Volume 14. Dir. Furuhashi Kazuhiro. Perf. Suzukaze Mayo, Fujitani Miki, Ueda Yûji, Tomînaga Mina, Suzuoki Hirotaka. DVD. Anime Works, 2001

Hillsborough, Romulus. Shinsengumi: The Shogun's Last Samurai Corps. Vermont: Tuttle, 2005

Peacemaker Kurogane: Innocence Lost. Volume 1. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2004

Peacemaker Kurogane: Of Swords and Strength. Volume 2. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2004

Peacemaker Kurogane: Gunning For Trouble. Volume 3. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2005

Peacemaker Kurogane: A Path to Destruction. Volume 4. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2005

Peacemaker Kurogane: Spider's Web. Volume 5. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2004

Peacemaker Kurogane: A Prelude to Battle. Volume 6. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2004

Peacemaker Kurogane: Decision. Volume 7. Dir. Hirata Tomohiro. Perf. Kobayashi Yumiko, Ueda Yûji, Saiga Mitsuki, Matsuyama Takashi, Nakata Joji, Hashi Takaya, Yamaguchi Kappei, Toriumi Kosuke, Nagashima Yuko. DVD. ADV Films, 2004

Gohattô Dir. Oshima Nagisa. Perf. Takeshi Beat, Yoichi Sai, Takeda Shinji, Ibu Masato, Sakagami Jiro. DVD. 2002

Shinsengumi. 2005. Wikipedia.org. November 2005
<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinsengumi>>

Serizawa Kamo. 2005. Wikipedia.org. November 2005
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serizawa_Kamo>

Saitô Hajime. 2005. Wikipedia.org. November 2005
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saito_Hajime>

Shinsengumi – Detailed Synopsis & Review
< <http://nhkshinsengumi.tripod.com/synopsis.html>>

Watsuki Nobuhiro. *Rurouni Kenshin*. Volume 7. Trans. Gerard Jones and Yagi Kenichiro. California: Shonen Jump/Viz, 2004

Watsuki Nobuhiro. *Rurouni Kenshin*. Volume 14. Trans. Gerard Jones and Yagi Kenichiro. California: Shonen Jump/Viz, 2005

Mibu Gishi Den Dir. Takita Yojiro. Perf. Nakai Kiichi, Sato Koichi, Nomura Eugene, Saitô Ayumu, Sakai Masato, Shiomi Sansei. DVD. Premire Entertainment, 2004.

Pictures from:

ADV Films. 2005. (c)2003 Nanae Chrono ? MAG Garden/Shinsengumi-Tonsyo
<<http://www.advfilms.com>>

Cartelia. 1999.
<<http://www.cartelia.net/g/gohatto2.htm>>

CD Japan. 2005.
<<http://www.cdjapan.co.jp>>

Hijikata Toshizô Museum. 2005.
<<http://www.hijikata-toshizo.jp/>>

Ridgeback Press. 2003.

<<http://www.ridgebackpress.com/heroes/shinsegumi.htm>>

The Bakumatsu

<<http://thebakumatsu.tripod.com/pictures.html>>

Copyright 2005 Mike Wagner
