

Illusion City

Operation manual

MSX turbo R

English, First edition



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Preface

This operation manual comes with the translated version of the MSX game Illusion City, a masterpiece by Japanese software house Micro Cabin. While the original manual is completely written in the Japanese language, it also has lots of text and screenshots. This translated manual follows the original, however it has a much simpler, or less complex, layout to enhance its readability. Next to original images, it also contains custom made images done by Skelte Siweris Braaksma, a talented sketch artist from the Netherlands.

The original operations manual contained information for the MSX turbo R game as well as for the PC98 computer which the game was also released for. This manual focusses on the MSX turbo R release only. Together with the (translated) Databook, this package will help you understand the game's story, logic and content.

Enjoy Illusion City

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Text and image translation: 232

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<https://www.msxtranslations.com/>

Illusion City © is a 1991 role-playing video game originally developed and published by Microcabin for the MSX Turbo R home computer.

Carrier format

The translated version of Illusions City for MSX turbo R is available in Disk and ROM format. While the original game from 1991 was released exclusively on a span of disks, the new translation has been converted to run as a ROM cartridge as well. The ROM version ensures fast loading without bothering the player to insert the right disk as a convenience. The fast save and load actions can also be done using the ROM. More on fast save/load can be found further in the manual.

The disk version of the game spans 8 disks, where disk 1 is used for start-up, demo, MIDI data and user save data, and disks 2–8 contain the game scenario.

To save to and load from disk, an extra (blank) user disk can be used instead of disk 1.

The game can be run on physical MSX turbo R hardware or on an emulator, such as openMSX.

Sound support

Illusion City for MSX turbo R supports both PSG + MSX-MUSIC (FM) and MIDI sound output. Where PSG+FM are internal available on both the MSX turbo ST and GT machines, the MSX turbo R GT also has a build-in MIDI features. MIDI music is also available using an external MIDI interface cartridge. At the game's start-up screen, you can select between PSG+FM or MIDI to use as playback device during gameplay. Note that sound effects always use the internal PSG audio devices for playback.

The support for MIDI is limited to the MSX turbo R GT's on-board MSX-MIDI and the external MuPack MIDI cartridge and supports sound sources compatible with Roland CM-64/CM-32L/MT-32. Do note that if you use an MT-32 some instruments might be slightly different. A good example of this is that the thunder sound in the intro will not play on MT-32.

Save and Load

The player's game progress can be saved while accessing a computer terminal in the game. Loading can be done via the in-game menu or during game boot. Illusion City offers several ways to save and load:

- Disk1, the original game's first disk;

- User disk^{*1}, a dedicated floppy disk;
- PAC SRAM, using the build-in SRAM functionality of the (FM) Pana Amusement Cartridge made by Panasoft;
- Flash ROM, the new ROM version has extra space to support load/save;
- Fast save^{*2}, a quick save to internal memory;
- Save states, only on MSX emulator with save state features.

**1 Create a user disk by formatting a 2DD blank disk.*

**2 Note that data will be lost when the machine is turned off. Also, the game may automatically initiate a quick save on key moments.*

Choose the best option fitting your play style before starting the game.

Start up

Either insert disk#1 in the disk drive, or the ROM cartridge in an MSX extension slot, whether physical or via an emulator, and power the machine on. At the following prompt, select to either use PSG+FM or MIDI music.

After that, choose to continue from a previously save location or start the game from either the opening demo or the beginning of the adventure at the selection window.

How to play

The game can be controlled by either keyboard, joystick/pad connected in port 1, or an MSX mouse connected in port 2. Controlling the player with a mouse can be done using on-screen virtual keys or use point-and-click. See the “Game screen layout” section for more information on the virtual keys.

In the main game screen, you can move your party using the keyboard cursor keys or joystick to every direction. Long press to continue walking or use the “continue walking” option. This option is engaged by shot-B, press it to toggle on or off. When using a mouse, you can left click the virtual keys direction icons or point the mouse in the direction you want to move. When using the virtual keys, the same long press applies as regular keyboard cursors.

With the mouse, you can also left click in the game screen to guide your party. Release the button to stop. Another option is to right click the mouse button, in that case the party will follow the mouse position. Press left click to release this mode again.

Furthermore, if you turn on auto-avoidance, the characters will automatically avoid obstacles and move smoothly.

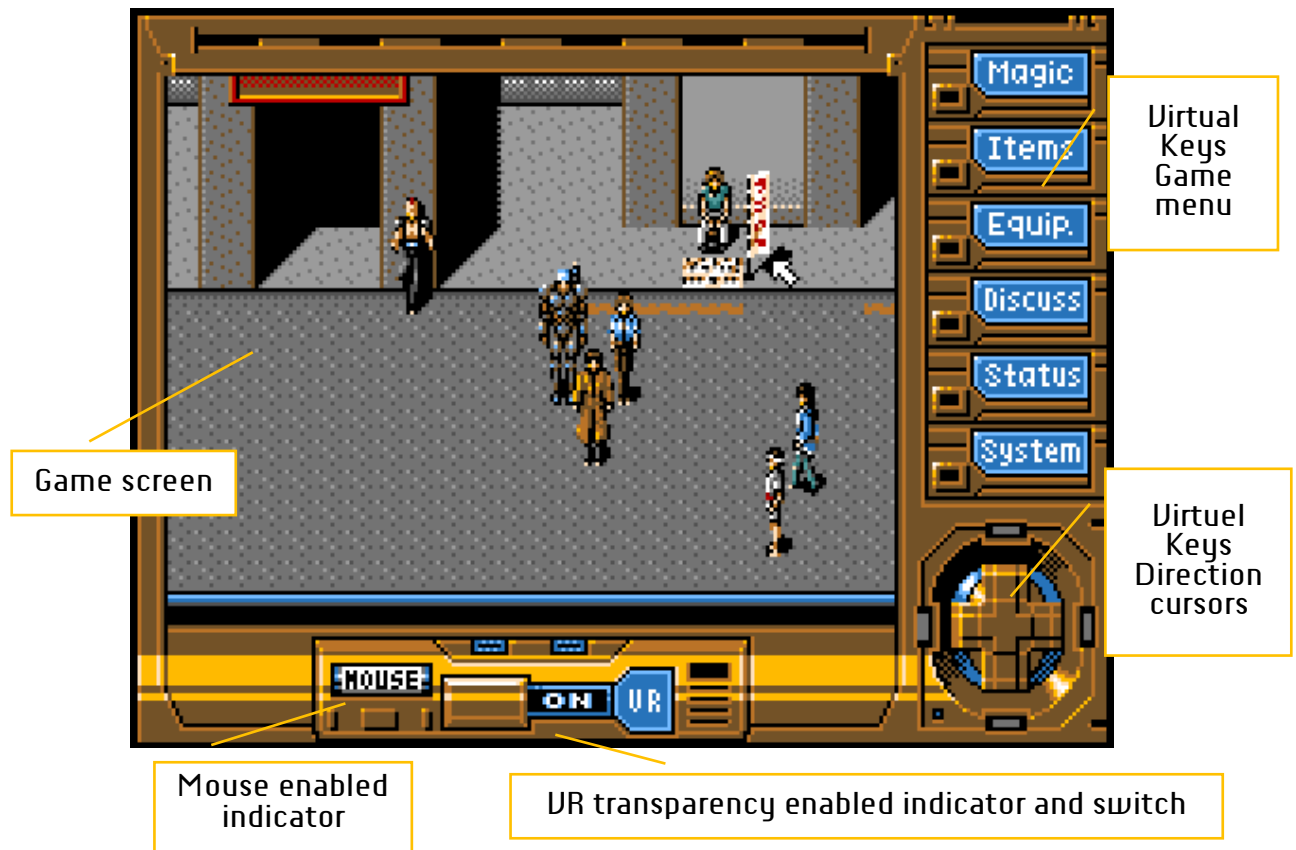
Button	name	description
[keyboard Arrow] [stick] [virtual arrow keys] [mouse]	direction	Control the direction of movement of the player; navigate through menus
[space] [enter] [fire A] [left click]	Shot-A	Confirm selection in menus; open the main menu during gameplay; point to the direction to walk
[esc] [shift] [fire B] [right click]	Shot-B	Cancel or abort; switch continuously-walk, or point to the direction to walk continuously
[stop]	Enable Mouse	Switch mouse control, use this to plug or unplug during game play and reset the mouse.

An overview of used buttons

Note that playing with keyboard or mouse can change some key bindings. For example, the space bar on the keyboard is used to open the game menu unless you are playing with mouse. In that case, the space bare acts like left click and is used to move the party.

Game screen layout

The screen is divided into the main play field, switch indicators and the virtual keys area. This area is accessible only when playing with mouse. The larger part of the screen shows the actual game. Here is an example of the screen layout during game play.



In the game screen example above, your party of three stands in the middle of the screen. Above and to the right are non-playable characters (NPC) which you can interact with. On the top left you see the entry to a shop. When directing your party to another spot, the screen will scroll with you.

When a mouse is active, the mouse indicator lights up. In that case, the virtual keys can be used just by clicking on the key icon. VR Transparency can be switched by clicking on the “VR” icon to turn the VR Transparency mode on or off.

The adventure

In this Cyber Punk Role-playing game, you'll embark on a journey full of wonder and excitement. During your travels, you will meet new friends that might join your party and fight alongside your cause, which is to save the girl... or is it?

Set in Hong Kong, which is divided into areas called the Outer, which remains the same as in the old century, and newly created areas called the Inner, your private AI assistant "Freddie" will wake you up as there is someone at the door...

And so, your adventure begins.

Party

Tian Ren, the main protagonist of the game, wakes up in his appartement; there is someone at the door. It is Mei Hong who asks for your help and brings in this girl called Hou Mei. You team up and go outside where you are suddenly attacked by a group of thugs, but it seems that you are strong enough to repel them. It is here where your first battle takes place.

Throughout the game your party may vary in size and members, limited to three. Each party member offers unique skills and strength during your adventure and will join depending on your progression. All members will automatically receive experience after completing a battle to increase level and skills.

Each member has their own statistics on health, magic, skills and so on. A character's level indicates the amount of game experience so far and affects the health and strength of that character. The characters' level is increased through combat, by gaining experience.

Conversations

Engaging in conversation with others is fundamental to your journey. By speaking with various individuals and gathering information, you can gain valuable insights. Additionally, as circumstances evolve, the perspectives and accounts shared by people may also adapt.

Computer Terminal

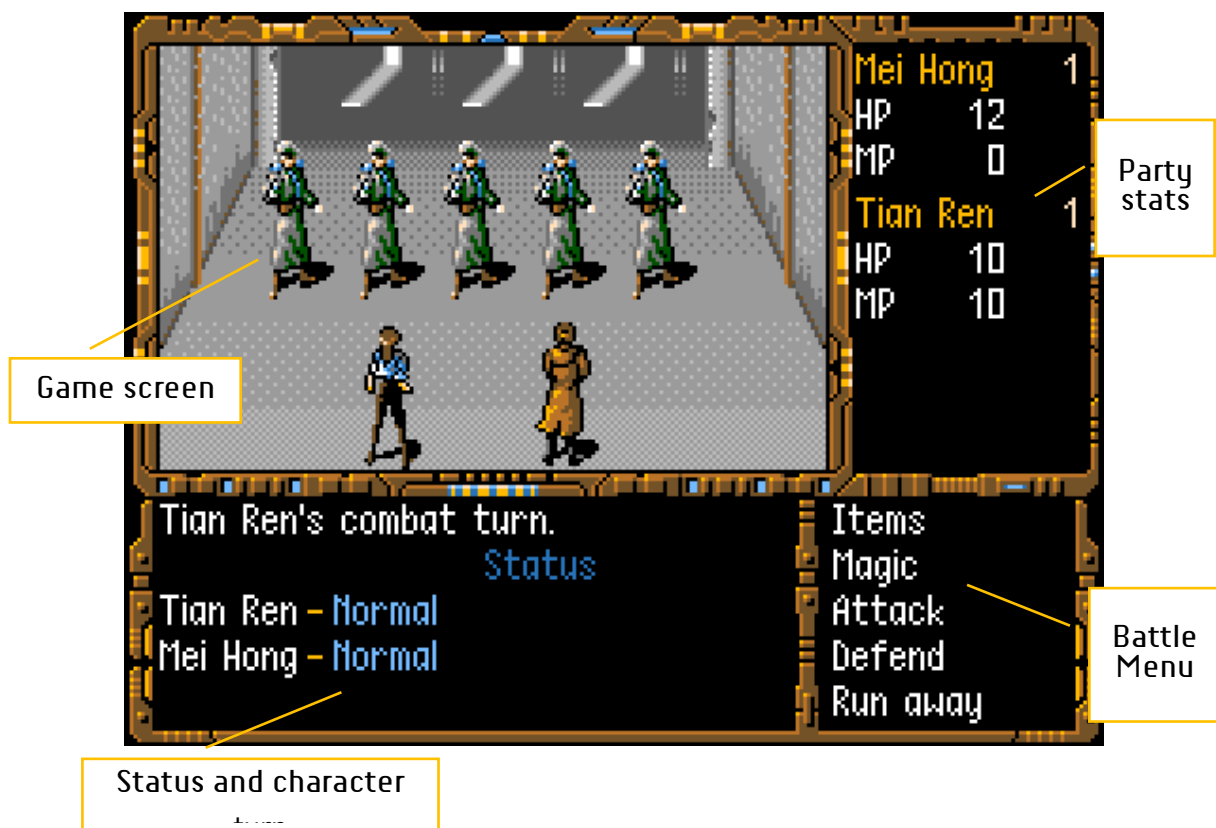
Along the way, there are numerous computer terminals available for gathering even more information but also to save your progress. All terminals are connected to the SIVA Network and activate automatically upon contact.

Combat

When you collide with an enemy while walking on the game field, the screen will automatically switch to the combat screen. In battle mode, fights occur until you win, lose, or escape. Win by reducing enemy vitality to 0; if a party's vitality reaches 0, they can't fight. Winning gives experience points.

The battle system is turn based, which means every individual in the brawl gets his or her chance to attack, defence, use an item or anything else. Individuals include party members and enemies. Battle order depends on character skill and increased speed from enhanced equipment.

An overview of the combat screen:



In the image above a typical battle scene is displayed. In the screen, at the top row, enemies confront your party. The battle is turn based, and when an individual takes turn the will animate their actions. Keep track of your party members' health at the top right side of the screen, which shows HP and MP statistics. The bottom part displays your party's status and battle menu.

Individuals taking part in combat can be inflicted by magic that might change their status. The current state is being displayed on screen. For you party, this is visible at the start of a turn on the lower part of the screen.

The character can have one of the following statuses:

Normal	The default status is “normal”, indicating a character is not under a spell
Bound	Become obsessed with an enemy
Paralysed	Paralyzed and unable to move
Poisoned	Poisoned
Sealed	Spells sealed
Mesmerised	Prevents attacks due to illusions the enemy sees.
Asleep	Sleeping
Confused	Confused by enemy magic; could potentially make an ally think they are an enemy and attack them.

Possible battle statuses

When under a spell, the chance is high that you lose your turn(s) in combat. Have another party member cast an anti-spell or use an antidote item to lift the spell.

Characters with zero vitality can't move until HP is restored or instant return techniques are used. Instantaneous return brings you back to a spot where you are safe. But if one of you has no more HP, you cannot move.

All characters incapacitated ends the game in “game over”, resuming it from the last save point. If this happens at a boss fight, you also have the option to retry the boss fight.

Using weapons in fights enhances related skills, boosting attack power and hit rate. Choose whether to develop versatile or specialized characters based on the strategy you want to use.

Details for using the combat menu is described later in this manual.

Recovery

After combat, your party may be wounded and low on remaining HP. Luckily there are ways to recover from your wounds. While traveling or during combat, medicine items or even magic spells might restore health. When visiting towns, staying the night at the local hotel will restore your health and magic in full.

Traveling by EV

While walking through the world of Hong Kong gets you practically anywhere, it is a time-consuming method of traveling. Luckily, there are vehicles available that will transport you in an instant. The underground Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the Outer District have an onboard computer with destinations available depending on your progress. Look for the EV stations in town.

Spinners, on the other hand, are a luxury air-transport system that is only available at the Inner District, or upper level of Hong Kong. Use Spinners for long distance traveling.

Shops

In town you may find several stores that carry drugs, weapons, clothing, tools and other valuable items. Spend your money wisely and do not forget to stock up on ammo – you do not want to run on empty during combat. The first store you encounter is Doc's, one of many stores you will find all over Hong Kong.

You can sell most equipment or items at stores for about 75% of their original price, which helps clear your inventory and earn money. Keep in mind that you have a limit on the types of items and weapons you can carry.

Skills

Each party member has certain skills to handle offensive weaponry, like guns or melee weapons. The skill to handle that weapon increases every time you use it, you get more experienced. This will result in higher hit rates, more damage etc. With higher experience, you gain access to a heavier arsenal. When you fight using a weapon, you will gain skill experience related to that weapon, and you can increase your abilities when using the same type of weapon. In other words, if you use the same type of weapon repeatedly, you can dramatically increase your attack power and hit rate.

Skills are directly connected with weapons, and their level is displayed in percentages up until a maximum skill level of 200%. Open the game menu and select "status" for an overview of your current skill levels.

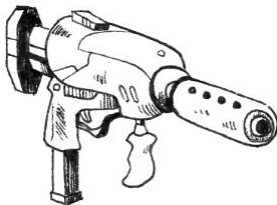
Equipment

To protect yourself from getting injured, or to deal damage to foes, you can equip yourself with weapons and armour. Only a selection of equipment can be carried at one time, choose these wisely. To deal damage, a firearm depends on ammunition like bullets or energy packs. A simple handgun fires one bullet at the time, while an automatic gun consumes much more in less time. Ammo can be bought in stores, keep plenty in your pockets during your travels. Equipment is also available at shops; you can either purchase or sell them.

Weapons have skills, and they can be upgraded by using it in battle. See the Skills paragraph for more information on skill levels. Weapons can be used depending on your character's level. Higher-level weapons deal more power than lower-level weapons but are also more expensive to buy. Remember that engaging in combat, and winning, will not only increase experience and level, but also gains your money.

There are various types of weapons, each managed by different party members. Both firearms and melee weapons can be used. Available options include guns, swords, staffs, claws, and slashing wires.

GUN



A single-handed use handheld weapon that is usually carried by trained police members, like Tian Ren and Mei Hong. Its ammo consists mostly of regular bullets or energy packs. Initially, Tian Ren carries a standard issue handgun.

The list of regular guns consists of handguns, blasters, (semi) automatic guns, old models like Smith & Wesson, and others.

RIFLE

A heavier type of weapon than a gun which has more destructive power but is also more difficult to handle. This long-barrelled firearm is designed for accurate shooting and are typically designed to be held with both hands.



Rifles like a regular shotgun, machine gun, M16a, and Thompson submachines are at your disposal. These types of guns mostly use rifle-bullets or energy packs as ammo. Some of these guns can fire at multiple enemies at once but take up more ammo that way.

HAND CANNON

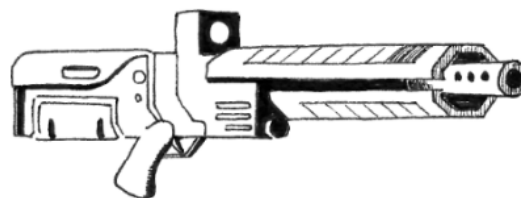


A truly devastating piece of weaponry that is classified as a large-Calibre gun. Only to be handled by a true mercenary or expert soldier, albeit man or woman. These types of weapons can either shoot straight up bullets, special charges, lasers or other enhanced ammunition.

Available cannon guns like a Napalm canon, rail cannon, or even a Monopole Gravity Cannon will surely help you in battle with their destructive force.

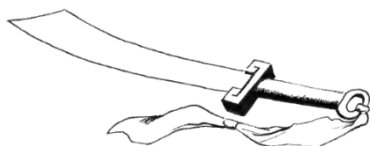
HEAVY WEAPON

This category of weapons gives you the most bang for a buck hit rate wise, they are true monster killers. They don't come cheap, though.



The available arsenal consists of heavy weapons like a flame thrower, buckshot, gatling gun or other type of automatic machine guns. They usually require a large calibre bullet as ammo.

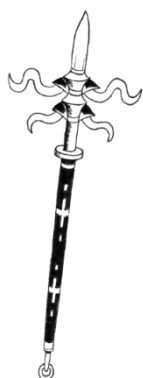
SWORD



A melee type of weapon that can yield great force for specific party members like Tian Ren. Ideal for quick kills in close combat. Don't let the appearance fool you, they can do great harm as most have divine and disturbing powers. Blades in

various sizes and forms are available to you.

STAFF

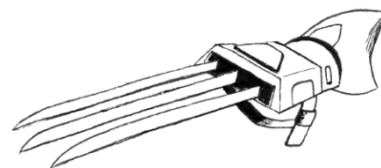


The weapon of choice for old warriors and sorcerers. These staffs are not just a simple pole, or wooden stick. They come with enhanced magic and are deadly in the hands of a master. With power and accuracy, wielding this kind of weapon might surprise the ignorant enemies – they will never know what hit them.

Only available to characters with high levels, the list includes an Octagonal Pole, Sapling Staff, Pole of True Will, White Snake Staff, Earth Pulse Staff and a Bamboo Lance.

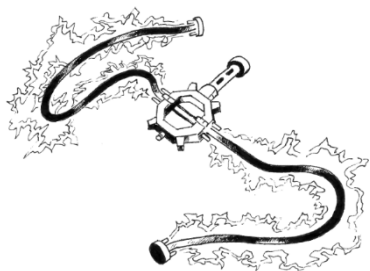
CLAWS

There are not many people that know how to handle this close-combat melee weapon. It takes a specialist to make use of its deadly sword-like blades. Luckily, you have such a specialist in your party. Hou Mei is an expert on these kinds of weapons and loves to scratch any monster with it.



Look out for the iron claws, thunder claws or death claws.

SLASHING WIRES



This type of high precision weapons engineering is typical for modern Hong Kong where slaying monsters is a daily job for some. More typically, it is a whip-like weapon designed for women as these wires are sophisticated, ultra-thin and light in use but have a deadly impact on any foe.

A variety of slashing wires like High Polymer, High Frequency or Fibrous Lunatite slashing Wires are available throughout your adventures.

PROTECTIVE GEAR

A strong selection of weapons lets you defeat monsters, but effective protective gear is essential for survival. Without proper defenses, offensive power alone won't keep you alive. Luckily, there is a wide range of protective gear available for your party.

Body gear will cover your torso, while head, hand, and footwear will protect the other parts. Most protective gear can be bought in stores and can be used depending on the characters level. Some, however, can only be found at secret locations – especially the magic infused gear.



For more in-depth information about your inventory like weapons and skills, consult the Illusion City data book.

Items

A selection of items is available to support you throughout your journey. Some items play a valuable role in the game, make sure you collect them. In particular, recovery items are an essential set of items to keep you safe on your travels. Stock up on items at any shop in town.

There is not endless space in your inventory to keep items. So, sell or drop obsolete ones if necessary.

Magic

While you might expect no wizards or warlocks in modern Hong Kong these days, there are, however, people who can invoke some basic magic. This includes healing magic but also damaging magic. It is said that true spirited people have magic in their roots, but they still need thorough training by a skilled teacher to use it. Master Shu Lao Shi is such a teacher who had Tian Ren as his pupil for a long time. Both can handle magic like no other.

There are spells to heal an individual or a whole party, stun or paralyze monsters, magic with explosive power and more devastating magic that must be used with care.

Magic is limited in use and determined by the amount of Magic Power (MP) the caster owns. Every magic spell comes with its own MP consumption. And using magic on multiple targets depletes your MP even faster. Your MP can be replenished with other magic, items, or by resting.

When in need, the “Instantaneous Return” technique might save you from dying and give you a change to recover through spending the night at a hotel nearby, or by using items or magic.

Level

Each party member has a “level” of experience, gained through combat. Throughout your adventure you gain experience by gradually defeating stronger enemies. When you hit a milestone, you level up, allowing you to defeat the (stronger) enemies later in the game. The maximum level per character is 99.

Game menu

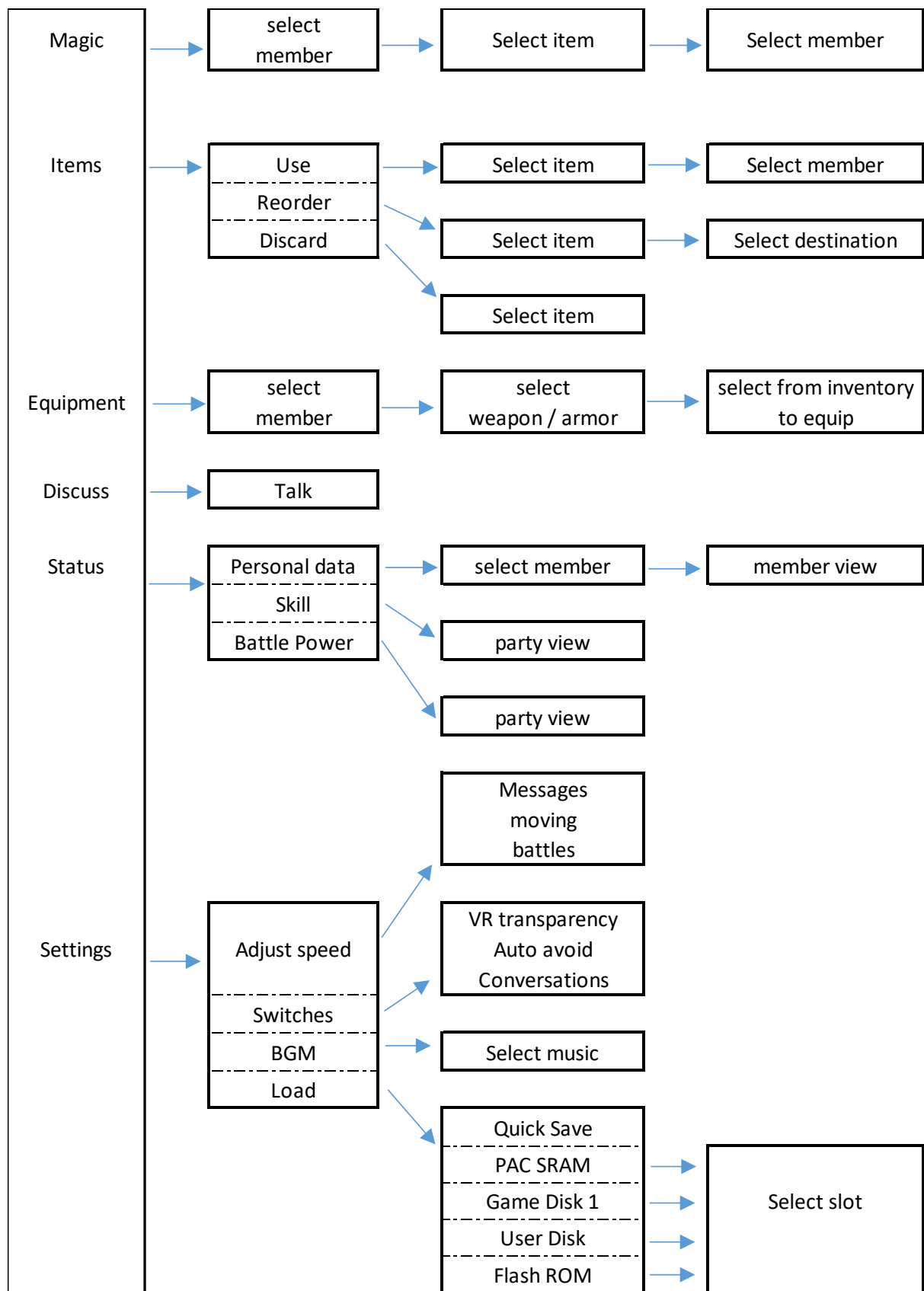
The general game menu can be accessed by pressing shot-A in the main game screen when playing with keyboard or by using the virtual menu keys on the right edge of the screen when using a mouse. A pop-up menu window will appear together with an information bar displaying the amount of money you currently possess. The menu is available for selecting inventory, checking status, or change game settings and has several sub menus for further details. Close a (sub) window with Shot-B.

The game menu has the following main options

Magic	Manage your magic per party member. Not all members have magic abilities
Items	Manage or use the current items you possess
Equipment	Manage weapons and armour per party member
Discuss	Consult party members
Status	Inspect personal statistics like skills and levels
System	Adjust game settings

in-game menu options

For reference, following is an overview of the game menu structure.



Status

The status of any party member can be viewed by personal statistics, skill level or battle power. The personal data displays the characters' level, experience, hit and magic points, and their attack and defence statistics. The latter information is dependent on the current active equipment.

The current level of the character is increased by gaining experience until the max of level 99 is reached.

Exp	Experience indicator. The amount of experience the character has so far.
Next	The amount of experience needed to level up.
HP	Hit point, or stamina. The amount of health of the character
MP	Magic point. The number of magic points left to use magic
Attack power	The attack ability is determined by the characters' equipped weapon
Defence power	The level of protection from the current equipped armour
Agility	Agility, or speed, influences battle turns.
Skill	The skill level of the current equipped weapon
Hit Ratio	The chance of hitting when attacking displayed as percentage

Player status levels

The skill level window displays an overview of the current party members and their weapon skills. Each skill (there are eight of them) can vary from 00, no skill, to 200, max skill.

The battle power window displays a summary of the personal data of each party member.

Settings

The setting menu allows you to change game features to your personal likings.

At the "adjust speed" window, game settings to control movement speed, battle speed, and message speed can be set.

At the "switches" sub menu, the following options can be switched on or off.

VR transparency *	When turned on, walls and people become transparent and can be seen through. It is useful in places where there are walls, and it is difficult to see.
Automatic avoidance	You will be able to move forward by avoiding walls, but sometimes you cannot avoid them completely and you will wander around.

Conversions	When enabled, a conversation with a (non-party) NPC automatically starts when you bump into them. Switching off ensures efficient traveling. * Note that to need to have this setting enabled to access a computer terminal.
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game switches

** About VR Transparency: During game play, characters will be hidden when they enter the shadows of a building or other object (this can be considered a realistic display). However, there are times when it is inconvenient as you can lose sight of your party. For such occasions, there is a mode that allows you to “see through”, called the VR Transparency Mode.*

Although BGM (Background Music) isn't truly a “setting”, this option lets you listen to the wonderful tunes from the IC sound team. Note that not all BGM songs are always available when playing the disk version (only those available on the disk) in contrast to the ROM version which always has all songs available.

Finally, use the *load* option to continue at a previously saved situation.

Combat menu

When you meet an enemy, turn-based combat begins. You can choose to fight or, if possible, flee. When fleeing is not a possibility, the only option then is to confront the enemy. Your level and agility, amongst other things, influence how easy it is to flee.

Whenever it is a party member's turn to fight, use the battle menu for your next actions.

The menu is automatically active whenever it is a party member's turn to engage. While brute attacks with your weapon might deal damage, items and magic are at one's disposal for extra support.

Items	select and use an item
Magic*	select and use magic
Attack	attack one or more enemies with your current equipped weapon
Defend	set the character in defensive mode and skip a turn
Run away	exit combat, if possible

Battle menu

** Magic is only available for some party members*

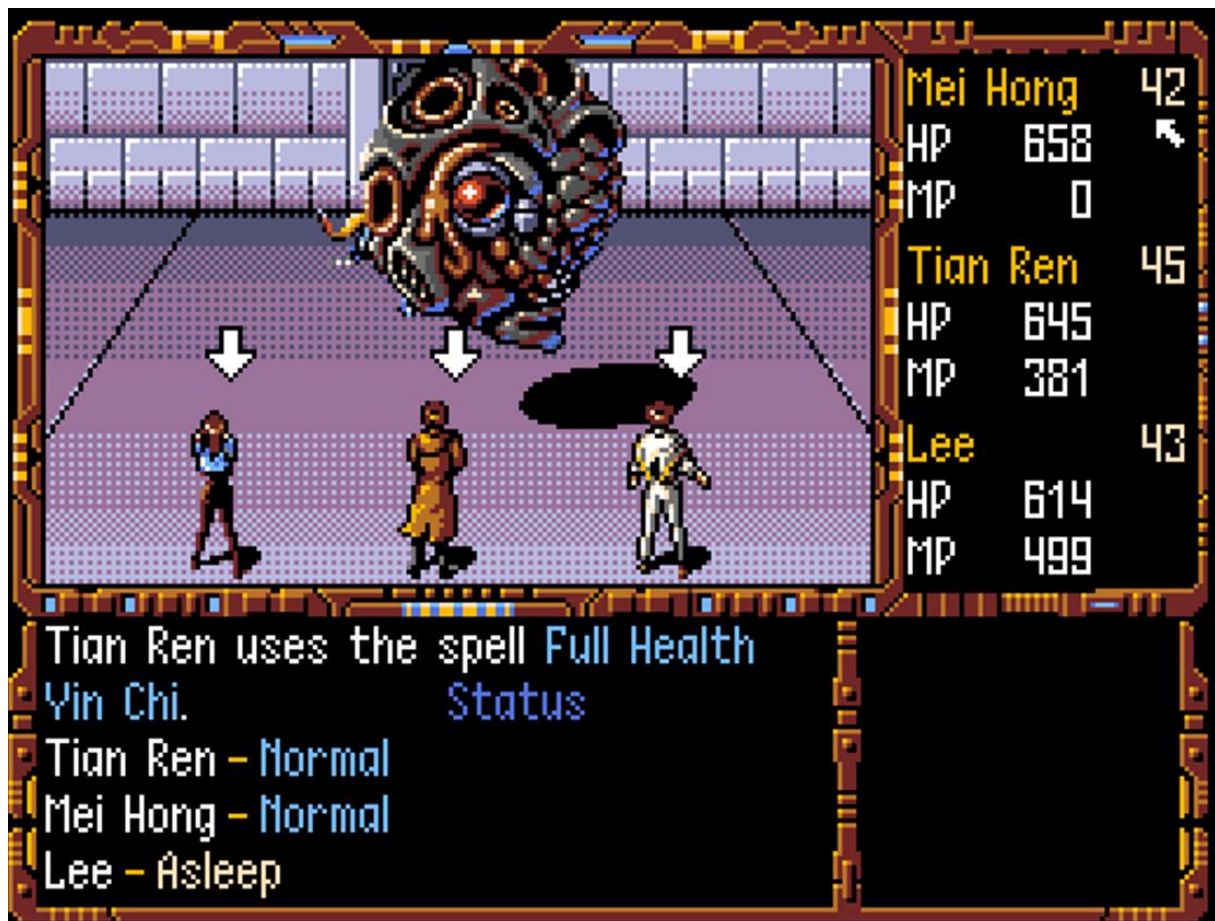
Use any item at your disposal to either attack the enemy or heal your party. The same goes for magic, use it to increase the chance for success. Magic healing can be done on an individual party member, or the whole party.

The attack and defend power depend on your currently equipped weapon and armour. There is no option to switch equipment during battle. And as some battles prevent you from running away, be prepared before engaging in combat. If all else fails, and your member is too weak to fight, select *defend* to put him or her in protective mode and take less damage.

Targeting

For both enemy or party targeting, there is the possibility to either select an individual or a group of individuals. For example, targeting a group of enemies at once.

Use direction keys *left* and *right* to choose a target, or *direction up* to select multiple targets when playing with the keyboard. When playing with the mouse, point a specific target or point vaguely between targets to select all targets. The arrows above the target(s) indicate the current selection. Note that not all weapons or magic allow you to select multiple targets.



In the above example image, all party members are selected for Tian Ren's spell "Full Health". Be aware that this will cost more MP than just selecting one party member. Also notice that Tian Ren and Mei Hong have a "normal" (healthy) status, while Lee is under a spell and "Asleep".

When the fight is won, and your party is still alive, spells are lifted, and you will gain experience which helps you build your characters' levels.

Data book

To fully enjoy the game and its story, it is recommended to consult the Data Book. This document contains detailed information about the situation in Hong Kong, the disappearance of Hou Mei's sister, the protagonist(s) and their opponents, and lists of available equipment. A valuable source of information to guide you through the mysterious world of Illusion City.

Notes and credits

The following phrases are a direct translation from the original Operations Manual.

From the development staff

* GAME DESIGNER YASUHIKO NAKATSU'S STATEMENT

"As a game designer, I was thinking about how to create a setting that has not been seen much in the game world up until now, and I thought, "Okay, the base is in the future. But I want you to think about it ... Yes, I have no choice but to make it a super legend!! And the setting is...? There's no art there, so Hong Kong is the obvious choice, considering the power. Let's mix Japan, China, and India together and make it a summary of Asia. Okay, this setting will do. Next is the presentation.

I want to delve deeper into the drama than before, and although it's a cheat in RPGs, I'll try to incorporate a lot of event scenes without the main character. Also, I think it's more interesting to have the characters act themselves than to have visual scenes... Let's make special control stickers and have them express themselves boldly through their movements." This is the game that was created.

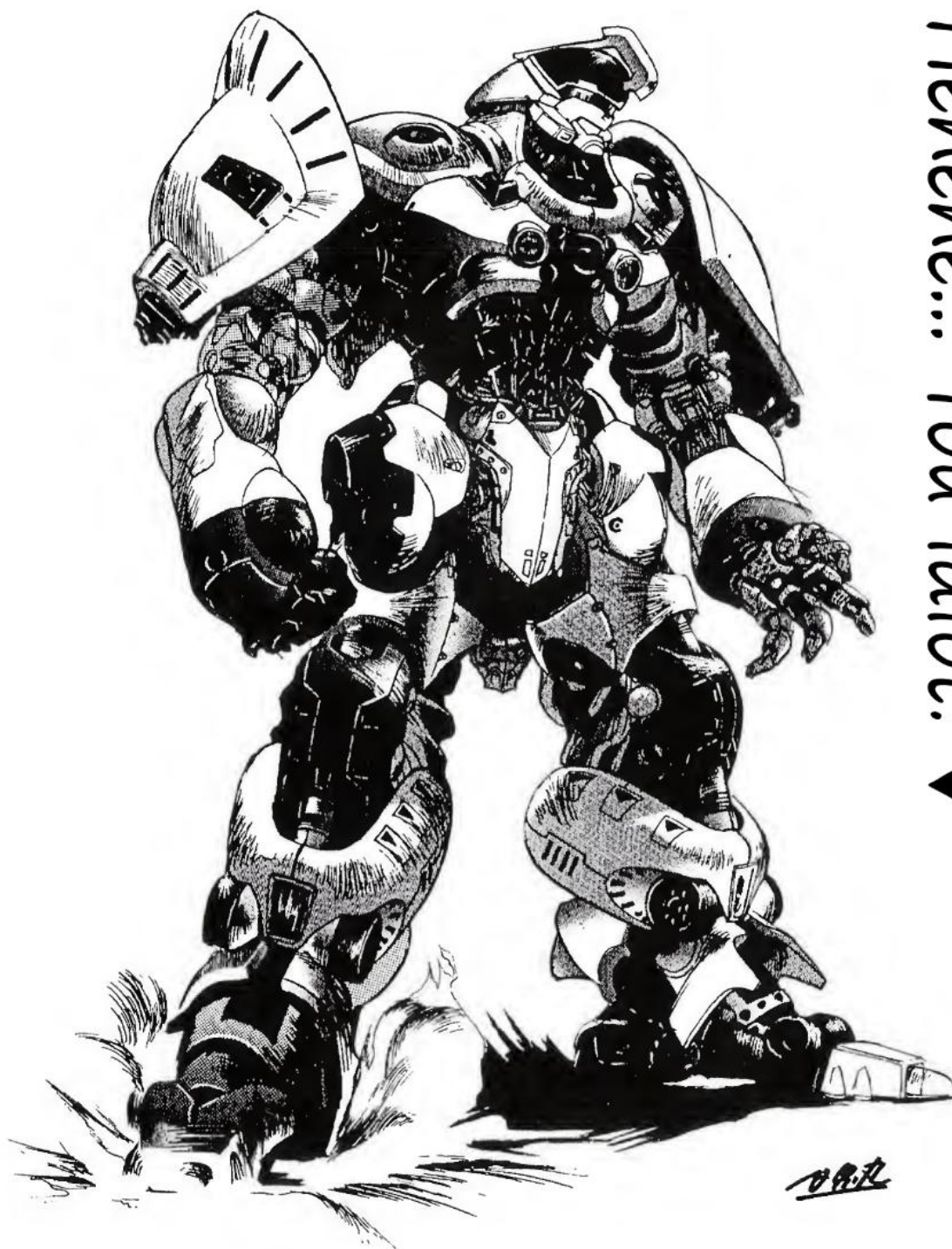
As a system designer. First of all, I'm sorry to those who have the PC98 version... The graphics in 400-line mode did not fit into 640KB of memory. Please wait until 98 memory becomes 2MB standard. To those who have 88VA, I'm sorry for the long load. It didn't fit into 512KB of memory. It was so fast, the R800 was moaning... To those who have MSXtR, I'm sorry for not having PCM. The memory is full. I've already used up 256KB.

Anyway, it was hard to develop at the same time. The characteristics of the machines are completely different. But I think it's a step into a different world from the games that ran on the PC88 and MSX2.

Well, if we have the chance, I'll see you again.

PS I'd like to add that this is a work that was announced in the May issue of MSX Magazine."

Since I don't have much time,
I'll reuse this old picture.



Hehehe... You idiot! ♥

“There are places where I couldn’t make the story, and the characters work as well together as I’d liked. That’s why I am worried whether everyone will really like it... I did my best to challenge taboos in the game, despite some other staff members opposing the idea. Hopefully you will see this will hit the mark. It is unfortunate, that because there are a lot of characters, you cannot closely follow individual people. Writing game scenarios is difficult.”

*** SCRIPTS, EVENT STORYBOARDS, PRODUCER – 23 SEPTEMBER 1991, MASASHI KATO**



* PROGRAMMER SHOJIRO AOKI'S MESSAGE

"I'm going to travel to a faraway place. Please don't look for me. The End."

* GRAPHIC DESIGNER HITOSHI SUENAGA'S MESSAGE



* GRAPHIC DESIGNER KENZO FURUYA'S OPINION

19 September 1991 (Typhoon Mireille)

This time I'm mainly doing the opening and ending demo for the MSX. Originally, I was planning to also do the PC98 version, but it became impossible due to the schedule kept changing.

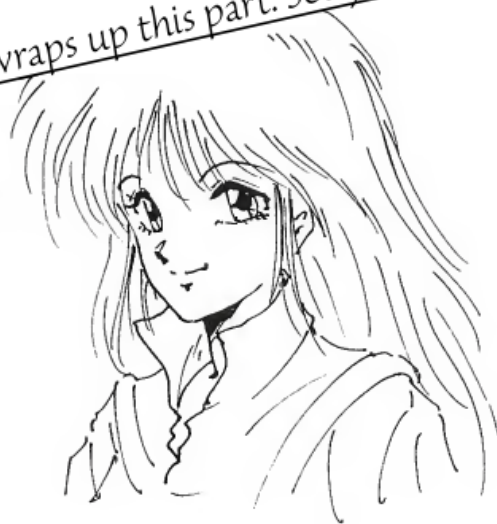
I was able to work on the opening demo, but because I barely had time for the ending, I ended up almost not working on it. It's a pity. If you compare that to for instance Fray.....

The MSX version of Illusion can only be played on Turbo R, Emulators, MSX VR and MSX3 [redacted to show current options]. Other users won't be able to play it. That is so sad... There is nothing to do for the 2+ users and users of earlier generations but to buy a Turbo R, MSX VR or MSX3 [redacted]. Except if they also have a PC98. And besides, there is MIDI compatible music, so finally you can listen to MIDI on MSX as well. That's so cool...

When you send in the user survey cards, it would be nice if you could write down which character(s) you like most. I wonder who is the most popular one? With our users being mostly men, I guess it's probably going to be a woman! I'll be waiting for those surveys to come in! [note: a question is added in the online survey for the patch].

Well, that wraps up this part. See you...

19 September 1991 12:30 PM (賢)



Hi MSX users, it's been a while!!

For this game I was in the lead for "event character animations", "battle animations", "monster design" and "field character design". That's right, just like with Fray I was working on animations and monsters (I guess it's becoming a regular thing...). However, this time I'm a bit overworked. So I had to ask Youichirou Kawaguchi, who helped on Tower of Gazzel with corrections for the PC98 version. I'm very grateful to him. And in all seriousness, it made me think a bit about the planning and other elements of "Illusion"... Creating a game is a very eventful process... Yeah... At the time I write this (19th of September) "Illusion" is still in the production phase. The light at the end of the tunnel is so far it can barely be seen! If you read this, it probably means the game has been successfully released. Well, that would be wonderful. Lastly, I read through all of the survey postcards. At the very least I'm the one in charge for my own parts (that's what the staff rolls are for), so please feel free to complain. I'll take your complaints in consideration. Oh, it's fine if you want to make some lame jokes, but... you then must buy 100 copies of Illusion City!!



Darn! I thought I'd be able to enjoy debugging Illusion but... oh well, ha ha. In the 2 years since I have come to Microcabin, there hasn't been a game I haven't been involved in... so to say (no joke). Yeah, that's right, but I wasn't even in the staff scroll for Fray, even though I did a bit of work on the event graphics (people's close ups) that were well liked! (I was at a lower level than the others). *sob sob*



Awwww,
Things didn't all come
together...
Youichirou Kawaguchi -
"Jinnai's Helper"

*** MUSIC COMPOSER YASAFUMI FUKUDA'S MESSAGE**

"Great to see you again! My name is Yasafumi and I'm in charge of music. This game is my second, following "The Tower of Gazel". Illusion City differs greatly in setting from the Xak series, both in time and in location, so I chose to change the BGMs accordingly. But when it came down to it to compose music, I had much trouble getting into it. But with a little assistance, I think I was able to make some very good songs. I'll continue to steadily create some more good songs!"

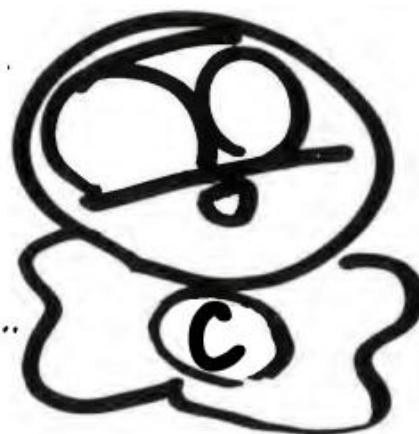
*Well
, see you again with our next game."*

*** MUSIC COMPOSER TADAHIRO NITTA'S MESSAGE**

~ Little Tian vs. the Capt'n ~
{  ~Eerie atmosphere~
Strings *Bom* *Bom* *Bom*



Well, what kind of
song will it be?
I don't know
that either...
Someone make it...



*** MUSIC COMPOSER YUKIHARU URITA'S OPINIONS**

"Hello, hello. I'm Yukiharu and I'm in charge of music. Have you already finished the game? By the way, the Microcabin sound team groaned, were distressed, fell down crying and raged (!?) this time with Illusion City. These songs are the result. Mr. Nitta is a base player who looks up to Akira Ifukube as his inspiration and Mr. Fukuda is a guitarist who is "baptised" by the music of Steve Vai and Jaco Pastorius. And I am a keyboard player who deeply respects George Winston and Katsuhisa Hattori as my teachers. These three people will be presenting their music (having said that, there are only 3 staff members on the team). Listen well (also if you don't listen well) and you will hear each of these 3 people's characteristics come out in all their glory. Mine are just event songs (aside from 1 battle song). This time I composed something like movie music.

Please have a listen to them in the BGM mode. I'd really appreciate it if you could write on the survey cards something like "The song for this scene was good!" or "Here it sounded weird!". Also, I would be thrilled if you arrange songs of Xak et cetera and send them to us. Finally, Mr. Miyoshi who has lent me his Turbo R and everyone else, thank you very much.

P.S. Is anyone selling an E-mu Emulator II cheaply?"

*** PROGRAMMER HIROSHI YAMADA'S OPINIONS**

"I hope you enjoyed Illusion City? This time I was again responsible for the scenario system and to fully write the MIDI music driver. To all those users who praised our games with "Good music despite it only being OPLL", what did you think of the sound of the CM-32? Now it's MIDI all of a sudden! Well, this is a bit bothersome. First of all, the task was the analysis of RCP files. It was a nightmare since there was almost no documentation, so I did it myself. Well, at least both the RCP player I made worked and the RCP data worked. So, it is okay, isn't it?

My apologies to people who have audio sources that don't support CM mode. This specification was chosen to draw out the potential of the audio source. If it was just about creating sound, it could be outperformed by FM sound sources. Oh right, in September I had to help with the PC98 version: building and putting the finishing touches to the PC98 version. It was a very intense final stage of development.

Ahhhh... so sleepy..."

From the translation staff

* MAX IWAMOTO

“It’s been three-and-a-half years since we started this translation, and now we’re just two days away from release. Honestly, it’s not as polished as some of our earlier projects, but the scale of this one is huge.

We promised to have it ready for MSX2GOTO40, and we’re keeping that promise. The last few months—and especially these past three weeks—have been exhausting.

Right now, I’m just very tired. Hopefully, when we put out a polished update, I’ll be able to write a better note.”

* 232

“At an early age I got into contact with Microcabin games like Happy Fred, Pico Pico and Polar Star on a compilation set I bought. But I got hooked when I played games from the Xak series. The demos and the music were so good, they straight up pulled me into those games and never let me go.

When I saw Illusion City for the first time at an MSX club I frequented, I was sold. That compelling demo setting and great music. And the in-game animations/ cut scenes were amazing to see on an MSX back then. Bought a turbo R with the game soon after and the rest is history. Thank you Microcabin for creating this wonderful game!

I always wanted to translate the game to English, but due to the size and complexity it felt like it was a game to translate further down the line. Until Max came up with the idea of just doing it, instead of mulling it over as one of our future projects.

It became a bigger project than we had even thought. There were a lot of nice times during development. But also, some lesser moments due to life stuff, fixing some hard bugs from the game or just the size of the project. Let me take this moment to thank Max especially for all his efforts. If I didn’t know any better, he must have collected the Dasa for himself, because he proved to be a wizard of enormous proportions to pull off what he did.”

*** RÓMAN VAN DER MEULEN**

“As a young man, I was impressed by the quality and playability of Microcabin’s games. My introduction to Microcabin was through XAK, an engaging RPG on the MSX platform and my favourite genre. I also enjoyed XAKII, Fray, and Tower of Gazzel – must-plays for MSX gamers. Although these Japanese titles lacked English translations, I still played them, learning as I went.

Microcabin then released “Illusion City,” which seemed promising, and I was excited to get a copy. However, I was disappointed to find it too difficult to play or understand since it too was only available in Japanese, so I set it aside and never revisited it...

Until recently, when I joined the Illusion City translation team, where I participated in test runs. It felt like I was a teenager again when booting disk 1; it brought back memories from earlier years. Finally I could experience this masterpiece. Exciting!

Working with the translation team was a delight, not only because we were discussing MSX, and especially Illusion City related content, but also because these are wonderful people. I collaborated with Max and 232 to get this project finished by summer 2025. In addition to testing the game, I revised the operation manual into its present format. I trust it will assist you in understanding Illusion City and allow you to enjoy the experience as much as I did.”

Credits

Planning, original concept and game design	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Scripts and Event storyboards, producer	Masashi Kato
Character and concept design	Hyakkimaru (Kouji Nakakita)
Map design	Hitoshi Suenaga
Monster design	Yasuhiro Jinnai
Event character design	Yasuhiro Jinnai
Assistant event character design	Youichirou Kawaguchi
Opening and Ending graphics	Hyakkimaru (Kouji Nakakita), Hitoshi Suenaga, Kenzo Furuya, Yasuhiro Jinnai, Youichirou Kawaguchi, Hiroaki Kubo, Yasumitsu Okuda, Fumihide Aoki
Music	Tadahiro Nitta, Yasufumi Fukuda, Yukiharu Urita
Music Driver	Hiroshi Yamada
Scenario Program	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
PC98 Program	Shojiro Aoki, Katsuya Nagai, Hiroshi Yamada, Akira Misoda, Katsumi Ito
MSX Program	Yasuhiko Nakatsu, Katsumi Ito
VR System version 2.5	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Graphics tool	Akira Misoda
Map tool	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Character tool	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Effects tool	Shojiro Aoki
Effects system	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Meal system	Hiroshi Yamada
Director	Yasuhiko Nakatsu
Assistance	Etsuko Taniguchi, Rika Niimi
Image Illustration	Yukio Kitta
Special Thanks	Yoshiharu Kada, Kazuhiro Kinoshita, Hirokazu Ohta, Kitano, Tetsuya Seta, Masashi Kato, Suginaka, Toshiyuki Mukaiyama, Shinya Watanabe, Yoshi Watanabe, Nagato, Hideaki Ito, R. Hasegawa
Production and copyright	Microcabin/ Arrowsoft
English translation	MSX Translations
Translation, research, testing, databook	232
Reverse engineering, code, GFX, fonts	Max Iwamoto
Proofing, testing, operations manual	Róman van der Meulen
Proofing, testing	Vampier, Krop

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