

Breath of Fire IV Dragon Handbook

by L. A. Isen

Updated to v1.5 on Oct 22, 2003

BREATH OF FIRE

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BREATH OF FIRE
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Dragon
Handbook

That's all the ANSI graphics you get. Sorry.

Version 0.1: 8/17/0. Nothing but a framework, using movelists from one of the many BoF4 FAQs on gamefaqs.com, making sure to avoid looking at storyline and non-dragon-related gameplay spoilers. :) Nothing worth releasing, as none of it is my own writing.

Version 0.7: 12/4/0. I'm most of the way through the game, and I've finally seen most of the dragon forms with my own eyes. Still to be added: Evolved forms of Behemoth, Myrmidion, and Mutant (Bandersnatch, Knight, and Punk in the Japanese game, but I've little reason to believe they'll use those names, since Jubjub and Jabberwock weren't used for the evolved Wyvern and Serpent). Need the names, descriptions, and approximate effects of the Sea and Sand dragon summons. Need to replay the game to get the Wyvern's stats. Need to find out why the heck Kaiser is still uncontrollable. Redone: All spell names and descriptions.

Version 0.75: 12/7/0. Just finished the game tonight, with a Clear Game Save time of 51:05. I still have far to go on this guide, however, since I only have 15,000 Game Points and three un-upgraded dragon forms (the same three listed above). Added in stats for the Infini Dragon.

Version 0.751: 12/7/0. While re-testing a few things I wrote about in the above update, I found the last two Evocations. I also found that Kaiser was now controllable (it apparently *was* the missing Evocations that was keeping him berserk), so I included his stat bonuses.

Version 1.0: 12/8/0. Played with the Sandflyer mini-game to see how the scoring works, and got up to 36,368 Game Points in the process. Got stats for the Knight, Mammoth, and Punk dragons (as well as confirmed the names and move lists). Figured out exactly how the

Dragon Upgrade system works. Found another mini-game, copied the in-game descriptions of the dragons, added information on Catastrophe and Earthshaker combos. Oh, did I mention that this is the *first* public release? All the above updates were just warm-ups. :)

- Version 1.2: 12/11/0. Figured out why I was getting such odd percentage numbers for the dragon power-ups: Because the armor and weapons are counted *after* the base stats power up. With that taken into account, the numbers all came out evenly. The only problem is, that means I have to play through the game again to get the un-upgraded stat boosts for all the dragons. :) Currently still approximate: Behemoth, Myrmidon, Punk (though I believe Punk is correct). Still unknown: Wyvern. All others are now correct.
- Version 1.3: 12/13/0. Finally got far enough in my second game to get correct stats for Behemoth, Myrmidon, and Punk, and finally got Wyvern's stats. Updated the Sheep mini-game a bit. My second time through the game I currently have about 24,000 Game Points (with the Wyvern and Mutant upgraded), with the Sandflier courses left completely undone... at the moment :) Updated Evocation section to include how to get *all* the dragons (making this guide just a bit less spoiler-free).
- Version 1.35: 12/18/0. Upgraded all the dragons in my second game. I have 50,000 game points (more or less exactly). Some oddities: Stardrop is at Level 4, not Level 3 as expected. Perhaps the Punk gains breath levels more quickly than the Mutant. Also received new information suggesting that having all the dragon crystals *isn't* required to control Kaiser, just all the Dragon summons. Unfortunately, I'll have to play through the game again to test this (actually, that's not entirely true; I have a game saved somewhat close to the final dragon summon).
- Version 1.4: 12/23/0. Minor updates; confirmed which Faerie shop sells the Shaman's Ring, added in the names of some of the music in the game (as listed in the Faerie music shop), and added in a new quick-reference section for learnable skills from each of the dragons.
- Version 1.45: 1/1/1. Happy New Year. :) A third time through the game, and I'm on Chapter III already. Corrected the order you can get the dragon Evocations (Grass dragon is available as soon as you finish Mt. Ryft, while the Mud dragon isn't available until you get the Sandflier, so they're *not* both available at the same time). Added the oddity of the *fourth* Dragon-magic combo (Super Nova, Earthshaker, Catastrophe.. and Mjollnir). Corrected spelling of Tarhn's name :)
- Version 1.46: 1/15/1. Took a break from playing BoF4 for a while to forge my way through the Super Story Mode of Jojo's Bizarre Adventure. Anyway, confirmed the Behemoth's stats and that only Evocations, not Crystals, are necessary to control Kaiser. Added an additional note about Infini dragon.
- Version 1.48: 1/18/1. No, the previous two versions were never uploaded, so you haven't missed anything :) Added an entire section on what the names of the dragon-forms mean, as well as included the Japanese names for the dragons therein (where different from the American). Also changed my e-mail address. Added rant about spam, below.
- Version 1.5: 3/12/1. Just when you probably thought I wasn't going to update again.... well, I got a Gameshark the other day. I've been using it

to test various spells, dragon and otherwise, and playing with Game points for Stardrop. Added a new section for such musings, and confirmed a lot of little details throughout (like the Mjollnir combo).

Version 1.5: 3/30/1. No, that's not a typo. I just realized I never sent in the previous update :)

Version 1.5: 11/10/1. I thought I sent this in eight months ago. Moreover, a few months ago I did some research into the amount of damage the breath attacks cause, and was surprised by the result. I'll add that to the next revision.

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Do make sure, however, that you are looking at the most recent version of this guide, which should always be on my web stie and www.gamefaqs.com.

Breath of Fire and all related names are, of course, (c) Capcom. The Pokemon names that I've worked into the latest release are (c) Nintendo / Game Freak / Creatures. This is an informational work only.

Oh, yes, and I charge a lot of money for spam. If you see my address above, and somehow think that gives you the right to send me e-mail about cable descramblers or ways I can MAKE MORE MONEY IN THIRTY DAY\$, then I think that gives me the right to charge you \$500 for processing your e-mail. \$1000 if your spam contains HTML or Javascript. I believe you should have to pay for putting advertisement in my Inbox, just as you'd have to pay to buy ad space from a newspaper or magazine. (For the record, I define 'spam' as any unsolicited commercial e-mail. If you want to ask me questions about my FAQ or about BoF in general, that's not spam) ;)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

i. Dragon Forms

A. Overview

B. Ryuu's Dragon Forms

1. Aura
2. Wyvern
3. Behemoth
4. Myrmidion
5. Mutant
6. Kaiser

C. Fou-Lu's Dragon Forms

1. Astral
2. Serpent
3. Behemoth
4. Tyrant

D. Infini

ii. Dragon Evocation

iii. Miscellany

- A. Dragon Abilities Quick Reference List
- B. Dragon Skills Quick Reference List
- C. Breath of Fire 1 Comparison
- D. Mini-Game Madness
- E. Etymology (or, What The Heck Is A Peist?)
- F. 'Sharking

i. Dragon Forms

A. Overview of the Breath of Fire IV Dragon System

For simplicity's sake, I'll just use Ryuu's name here. All of the following information applies to Fou-Lu's dragon transformations as well (unless specified otherwise). This text may contain minor spoilers (as does any guide), but as few as possible, hopefully. I've avoided storyline spoilers wherever possible (with the sole exception of "when or how you get this dragon-form" spoilers). If you want to find all the dragons and what they do for yourself, don't read this guide :)

The Dragons are handled somewhat differently this time around, though it still most closely resembles BoF3's system. Unlike BoF3, however, this isn't a complete transformation; Ryuu turns into a dragon-man (resembling the Warrior Dragon from BoF3), who can then use "Dragon Magic". This dragon-man looks the same for every dragon form, and Fou-Lu and Ryuu look almost exactly the same in this form, except that Ryuu's claws, tail, and wings are red, while Fou-Lu's are blue. Their dragon-form portraits have similar subtle differences, but are otherwise identical.

However, when using a Breath attack (DragonBreath, Eraser, etc), they transform into full dragon form for the attack, which is presented as a polygonal cinema scene. Think of it as a variation on the way Kaiser worked on BoF3, combined with the overblown - but fun to watch - summon spells from Final Fantasy. (After viewing the full breath sequence once, you have the option to skip the whole thing on future runs by pressing the X button).

Also, like BoF3 Kaiser, Ryuu has full access to his Spell and Skill lists in dragon-form. However, Ryuu has no spells this time around other than Transformation and Evocation magic (and, of course, any Skills you choose to give him). You don't have to worry that he'll be out of AP because he used them all casting healing spells in human form. Fou-Lu does not have Dragon Evocation spells, but he does share Ryuu's Skill list.

All dragon forms have separate HP, based on Ryuu's current maximum. If a dragon "dies" in battle, it simply causes Ryuu to revert... but that dragon form can't be used again until he rests at an inn or in camp, or uses the item Ambrosia to restore all dragons to full HP. However, dragons who have been injured in battle slowly regain HP out of battle as you walk around (1 HP per dragon per step). Note, however, that normal healing spells and items won't work on dragons. Ambrosia is the **only** item that can heal the dragons, and it's extremely rare. (Plus it can only be used in combat, and even then only by Ryuu himself).

The elemental dragons (including Mutant) upgrade (or 'evolve', as the game refers to it) into a more powerful form at 10,000, 20,000, 35,000, and 50,000 Game Points. The order they change is completely up to the player: When you pass 10,000 Points, the next elemental dragon you pick will

automatically and permanently upgrade into its superior form. Same at each plateau after that. Wyvern and Serpent are linked - if one evolves, so will the other (so you can't "waste" an upgrade by using it on Serpent). The only real differences between basic and upgraded forms are higher stats, a few extra moves on their ability list, and the dragon in the Breath attack is a slightly different color. Aura, Kaiser, Astral, and Tyrant cannot be upgraded - Kaiser and Tyrant *are*, in a sense, the upgraded forms of Aura and Astral (the game even describes them as such).

Note that the cost of transformation is related to Ryuu's level. At level 50, for example, it'll cost him 50 (Aura), 75 (Wyvern, Weyr, Behemoth, Mammoth, Myrmidon, Knight), 60 (Mutant, Punk), or 100 (Kaiser) AP to transform. Like BoF3, Ryuu must expend AP each round to maintain dragon form; unlike BoF3, this cost is 1/4 the transformation AP (rounded down), not 1/2. Note that the AP cost of the upgraded dragons is the same as their basic forms. Note also that Fou-Lu *starts* at level 64, so needs to use a lot of AP right from the beginning to transform. One major difference from BoF3, however, is that the Shaman's Ring *does* reduce the AP cost of transformation and maintainance (to 3/4 of normal, round all fractions down; there is no 1/2 AP reducer in this game that I'm aware of, unfortunately), as well as the cost of the abilities. Shaman's Rings can be purchased in the Faerie town's weapon shop (Lazy) for a whopping 40,000 Zenny each, plus there's one hidden in the final dungeon, or they are occasionally dropped by StarGazers.

One other major change from BoF3: Becuase Skills are learned by defending, rather than by Examining an opponent (in fact, selecting Guard acts as if you were Examining all opponents *and* allies), Ryuu can teach the other party members learnable Dragon Skills (the Strikes - including Searing Sand and Chlorine - for example) simply by attacking the opponents with them. Skills that can be learned from Ryuu's dragon forms will be marked with a *. Note you can't directly learn any Skills from Fou-Lu's dragon forms, since he has no companions to defend while he's attacking. In this case, I've marked the ones that could have been learned, in case you want to keep an eye out for them from other enemies.

For Dragon-magic (spells like Hwa and Bing, for example), I'll just use the main name, not the (fire) annotation that the game uses. Dragon-magic spells are generally similar to the normal versions of the spells usable by all characters, with two exceptions: They cost significantly fewer AP to cast (not including the cost to transform and maintain the form, of course), and they each hit twice.

Finally, for the most part, the most useful thing to do with all the dragon forms in most situations is just unleash their breath attack every round. (This especially goes for Fou-Lu's scenarios). This is best done at the end of a combo, which increases the number of hits you get out of the breath attacks (most hit six times normally) They hit three extra times if they're the second attack in a combo, and six extra times if they're tacked onto the end of a combo. Note that nothing can combo *after* a Breath attack except for another Breath attack (which is limited to Ershin's Primus spell normally). For the upgraded dragons, their Level 3 elemental magic is often useful, and the Ultimate Dragons (Kaiser and Tyrant) have the extremely powerful Aura Smash, but all those attacks cost AP to use.

Note: Ability upgrades are for *base* stats, and don't include equipped weapons and armor. (So to calculate, say, a 150% boost to Attack, take the current Attack score, subtract the weapon power, multiply by 150%, and add the weapon power back in).

B. Ryuu's Dragon Forms

I can't stress this enough: In the very first random-encounter area, have Ryuu learn Rest from the Eye Goos. Unlike BoF3, BoF4's Rest is extremely useful, restoring quite a few hit and magic points (when I first learned it, it was restoring 50 HP and 5 AP, at level 46 it's restoring about 200 hp and 20 AP - the exact amount it restores seems to be based on Ryuu's Wisdom score, though I haven't figured out the exact formula). Combo it after Snooze (which I have on Ershin), and you'll never be hurting for AP for your dragon forms, no matter how high their cost goes. (As a side note, Snooze + Rest + Vitalize is a 37-hit combo, if you're trying to rack up the hits for one master or another)

Ryuu only learns Aura and Kaiser on his own. The others are gained by picking up Dragon Crystals.

1. Aura

This is Ryuu's first dragon form. It's also his cheapest (but by no means 'cheap') in terms of AP usage. The good news is that you get it very early in the game, far earlier than the first dragons in the other games. You get it very shortly after Fou-Lu gets his Astral Dragon transformation, while still in Chapter I, subsection 1: Signs and Portents. The downside is that you won't find any new dragon forms (except for the Berserk Kaiser) until much later in the game, so get used to this one. You'll be using it a lot. Plus, while you get the *form* at the start of Chapter I, you don't get the DragonBreath attack until you get the Kaiser, either.

On the other hand, DragonBreath never ceases to be useful (once you actually acquire it), and this form's relatively low cost means you can use it in almost any situation where you're want to take out a group of powerful opponents quickly. Note, however, that DragonBreath is the only one of Ryuu's breath attacks that is affected by opponent's physical defense scores. It's not really great at anything, but it's an improvement over Ryuu's normal form. This is my favorite form. I use this a lot even at level 40, when it costs 40 AP.

Transformation Cost: 1 AP/Level

Game description (before getting Kaiser): ????

Game description (after getting Kaiser): Basic dragon form. Normal property.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 150%

Attack: 120%

Defense: 110%

Wisdom: 120%

DragonBreath (0 AP; Category: Breath. Six non-elemental hits for a grand reduced by opponent's defense. Will be divided among multiple opponents)

*Flame Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Fire. Physical Fire Attack)

Hwa (1 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 1 Fire Magic on one target)

Rejuvenate (9 AP; Category: Holy. Medium healing of one target)

Barrier (4 AP; Category: LV Up. Magical damage halved for 3 turns. Warning: this also reduces the effects of healing spells and stat-boosting spells by half while it's in effect)

Upgrade: none

2. Wyvern

The Fire Gem that gives Ryuu this form is found in the Mount Giga area. It grants Ryuu fire-based powers, leaving him vulnerable to water/ice powers, moreso than usual. It also provides a few ability-boosting spells, but nothing other members of your party don't also have. Let him go offensive, and let Cray boost people's stats if they need it.

The second time through the game, I got this form just long enough to check its stat bonuses, then upgraded it immediately.

Transformation Cost: 1.5 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic flame dragon form. Flame and assist magic.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 150%

Attack: 120%

Defense: 120%

Wisdom: 130%

Gigaflame (0 AP; Category: Breath. Fire damage, multiple hits. Depends on current HP)

*Flame Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Fire. Physical Fire Attack)

Hwa (1 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 1 Fire Magic on one target)

Jeh (2 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 2 Fire Magic on all targets)

Might (3 AP; Category: ST Up. Increases attack power of target by 20%)

Upgrade: Weyr

This is the one I actually got to use. It's fast and powerful, and is currently my second choice for boss battles, after, of course, Kaiser. Plus, Behemoth and Myrmidon are just ugly. :) Again, it's vulnerable to water, but Ryuu can usually get an attack off with his enhanced agility before the opponents can hit him.

The best uses for this form, other than breath attacks, are either the Triple Inferno (Ershin's Inferno + Ursula's Inferno + Ryuu's Hwajeh, in that order), or the Super Nova combo (Any earth + any fire + Ryuu's Hwajeh - the fire attack turns into Eruption/Magma Blast/Ragnarok as usual, and Ryuu's Hwajeh turns into Super Nova, which hits four times per enemy plus causes confusion). (Note either of these combos will work with Kaiser, as well, since it also has the Hwajeh spell).

Game Description: Evolved flame dragon form. Flame and assist magic.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 200%

Attack: 180%

Defense: 170%

Agility: 150%

Wisdom: 200%

Gigaflame (0 AP; Category: Breath. Fire damage, multiple hits. Depends on current HP)

*Flame Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Fire. Physical Fire Attack)

Hwa (1 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 1 Fire Magic on one target)

Jeh (2 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 2 Fire Magic on all targets)

Hwajeh (3 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 3 Fire Magic on one target)

Might (3 AP; Category: ST Up. Increases attack power of target by 20%)

Protect (2 AP; Category: ST Up. Increases defense power of target by 20%)

3. Behemoth

It still seems strange to equate the little dragon-man form with what was the giant Behemoth in BoF3. Then again, the dragon in the MeteorStrike sequence - showing what looks like the BoF3 Behemoth after its been through hard times (some of its horns are broken off) - is definitely familiar. And once again, this form is slow, losing half of Ryu's Agility and Wisdom scores, and it's vulnerable to wind attacks. The Earth Gem for this form is located in the ? area between Pabpab and Saldine, second "room" (coming from Pabpab), near the center of the large tree-covered island in the middle. It's a blob of green in the middle of green grass in the middle of a green island, so it's a bit difficult to see. (I literally walked past it the first time).

This form has the *second* funniest breath attack, for the record. Its main weaknesses are its lack of speed, and its vulnerability to wind attacks. Also, Counter is almost useless because of this lack of speed. (That's two BoF games in a row that gives Counter to one of Ryu's *slowest* forms. Why?) On the other hand, it's worth using this form at least once for teaching Searing Sand, Counter, and possibly Blitz to your other party members.

Note, however, that you can learn Searing Sand and Counter from enemies in the area you find this Crystal, and that Fou-Lu can learn Blitz long before this point.

Transformation Cost: 1.5 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic earth dragon form. High defense.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 220%

Attack: 140%

Defense: 140%

Agility: 50%

Wisdom: 50%

MeteorStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Earth damage, nine hits. Damage depends on current HP)

*Searing Sand (2 AP; Category: Melee/Earth. Physical Earth Attack)

Patch (1 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 1 Earth Magic on all targets)

Chi Patch (2 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 2 Earth Magic on one target)

*Counter (1 AP; Category: Lv Up. Auto-counters physical attacks for the rest of the round. Note that since the Behemoth is very slow, this is useless unless your opponents are even slower)

Upgrade: Mammoth

I don't really use this one much. The combo Water (any level) + Earth (any level) + Patch Pah is rather useful - the earth attack becomes Storm/Tempest/Disaster as usual, and Patch Pah becomes Catastrophe, which is similar to Super Nova except for element, and the fact that it poisons the target at the end. Ultimately, though, I simply don't like this form because of the severe speed penalty.

Game Description: Evolved earth dragon form. High defense.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 350%

Attack: 160%

Defense: 160%
Agility: 50%
Wisdom: 50%

MeteorStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Earth damage, nine hits. Damage depends on current HP)

*Searing Sand (2 AP; Category: Melee/Earth. Physical Earth Attack)

Patoh (1 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 1 Earth Magic on all targets)

Chi Patoh (2 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 2 Earth Magic on one target)

Patoh Pah (3 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 3 Earth Magic on all targets)

*Counter (1 AP; Category: Lv Up. Auto-counters physical attacks for the rest of the round)

*Blitz (0 AP; Category: Melee. Damage depends on current HP and a bit of luck. Multiple hits. Reduces user's hp to 3/4 of previous total)

4. Myrmidon

Maybe it's just me, but the Myrmidon 'Dragon' doesn't look like a dragon at all, even less so than his BoF3 counterpart (who was pretty borderline anyway). When Ryuu uses his MetaStrike 'breath', he turns into what looks like a really tall human in a suit of armor. (Note also that Myrmidon is the name of the *basic* dragon form, not the advanced one as in BoF3). The only dragon-like traits are the sheild-like claw for the left hand, and the large wings on his legs (?).

That said, it's the best at physical attacks (so far), especially with the defense-ignoring Spirit Blast and MetaStrike, making it good for heavily-armored opponents. Note, however, that it doesn't have the best attack bonuses in either normal or evolved forms; it's more balanced than most of Ryuu's other forms.

After playing the game further, this is turning into one of my favorite forms. It's rather quick, and its "breath" attack hits twelve times instead of six. The only drawback is Ryuu's relatively low hit points in this form, making his "breath" attack weaker than it could be.

Be sure to learn Spirit Blast before upgrading this form; it becomes Cleave on the evolved Wind dragon. (Though there are many other places to learn Spirit Blast if you miss it here, so don't stress over it).

The Wind Gem is found in the ? section to the west of the Emperor's Tomb, in a secluded niche in the large open area (the burning forest area from Fou-Lu's very first scenario; the forest is gone now).

Transformation Cost: 1.5 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic wind dragon form. Superior attacks.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 150%

Attack: 120%

Defense: 120%

Agility: 120%

MetaStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Wind damage, multiple hits. Ignores opponent's defenses)

*Wind Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Wind. Physical Wind Attack)

P'ung (1 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 1 Wind Magic on one target)

Nah P'ung (2 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 2 Wind Magic on all targets)

*SpiritBlast (0 AP; Category: Melee. Physical attack at 1/3 strength that ignores defense)

Upgrade: Knight

Very, very nice. A Fire + Wind + Ahryu P'ung combo will cause the wind spell to turn into Firewind/Simoon/Gigaflare (as usual), and Ahryu P'ung into Earthshaker, which is pretty much identical to Super Nova (see the Weyr form), except for its element, and that it inflicts Stun instead of Confusion. (Note also that Ryuu is calling out the Japanese name for the move - either Terror Break or Terra Break, I can't quite make out which). It's tied with Weyr and Kaiser for the fastest of Ryuu's forms. Be sure to learn Shadowwalk from this form, if you haven't learned it from somewhere else.

I still think it doesn't look anything like a dragon. :)

Game Description: Evolved wind dragon form. Superior attacks.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 180%

Attack: 140%

Defense: 130%

Agility: 150%

Wisdom: 120%

MetaStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Wind damage, multiple hits. Ignores opponent's defense)

*Wind Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Wind. Physical Wind Attack)

P'ung (1 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 1 Wind Magic on one target)

Nah P'ung (2 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 2 Wind Magic on all targets)

Ahryu P'ung (3 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 3 Wind Magic on all targets)

*Cleave (3 AP; Category: Melee. Physical attack against all opponents at 1/8 strength that ignores defense)

*Shadowwalk (12 AP; Category: Melee. A never-miss Critical Hit. Pretty much identical to Scias's Shining Blade)

5. Mutant

Think BoF3's Pygmy. The full-dragon morph is small, cute, and not all that powerful... except it also lowers enemies' stats to minimum, if it works (and, unlike most other stat-lowering powers, this one works fairly often). His other attacks all inflict status ailments. This is, actually, a good form for doing indirect damage, while your other party members wail on the weakened foes. It causes a severe *drop* in most of Ryuu's stats, except for Wisdom. I've found it useful for reducing Cyclops' (and later versions thereof) attack scores to uselessness while doing some damage in the process.

The number of Game Points you have determines the 'Level' of Stardrop. This level has nothing to do with the game points required to evolve Mutant into the Punk. (So your Mutant can have up to Level 3 breath if you evolve him last, or your Punk could have Level 2 if you evolve him first - because Punk gets a +1 bonus to Stardrop's level in lieu of increased HP). Basically, the higher the level, the more 'hits' you get out of the Breath attack. It seems to be 6 hits at Level 1, plus 2 more hits for each 'level' of Stardrop. This breath never seems to do much damage, though, no matter how many hits it gets, thanks to Ryuu's low Hit Points in this form, but at Level 6 you get a full 16 hits out of it - the same as KaiserBreath! Note that the Mutant's levels only go from 1-5, though.

The Flawed Gem can be found in the En Jhou ruins. When you get this Crystal, the game will tell you you picked up the Earth Gem (again?), but the Flawed Gem is what's added to your Key item list. Do not, repeat, DO NOT give this to the man in Chiqua who wants it (or one of two other items) in return for the information he's offering. If he takes it, you won't get it back without restarting the game.

A warning: this form can also induce convulsive laughter in the

player and anyone watching the screen the first time this breath attack is viewed. :)

Transformation Cost: 1.2 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic mutant dragon form. UNKNOWN

Dragon ability bonuses (and penalties)

Hit Points: 50%

Attack: 50%

Agility: 80%

Wisdom: 180%

Stardrop (0 AP; Category: Breath. Multiple hits. Damage depends on current HP. May lower attack, defense, agility, and wisdom of targets to half their normal values. The number of hits increases as Game Points go up, increasing at 30000, 38000, 48000, 54000, and 62000 Game Points)

*Snap (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Down. Physical attack that may reduce defense by 20%)

*Chlorine (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Change. Physical attack that may poison target)

Sleep (3 AP; Category: ST Change. May put all opponents to sleep)

Silence (3 AP; Category: ST Change. Prevents spell-casting, but not physical skills, for all opponents)

Upgrade: Punk

It's still too damn cute, and rather wimpy, but at least its stats are a *little* better. (Agility doesn't drop, for example) Hit points are still very low, but Wisdom is extremely high. If you have any magic-based Skills on Ryuu (*including* Rest), this would be the form to use them in. (Rest, like all healing spells, won't recover any HP for Ryuu's dragon-form, but it will restore a lot of AP). Punk's Stardrop is also one level higher than Mutant's would be with the same number of Game Points - the levels range from 2 to 6.

Note also this form has the most abilities you can learn, as well. If you haven't learned Curse before now, be sure to add it to your Skill lists. It's actually, despite its drawbacks and humor value, a very useful form against some enemies (again, the Cyclops and their clones come to mind, as well as the T-Rex-like monsters you meet at the Emperor's Tomb onward)

The more I use this form, the more I like it. Don't underestimate the little guy. It also uses the second-least AP of all of Ryuu's dragon forms.

Game Description: Evolved mutant dragon form. UNKNOWN

Dragon ability bonuses (and penalties)

Hit Points: 50%

Attack: 50%

Wisdom: 250%

Stardrop (0 AP; Category: Breath. Multiple hits. Damage depends on current HP. May lower attack, defense, agility, and wisdom of targets to half their normal values. The number of hits increases as Game Points go up, increasing at 30000, 38000, 48000, 54000, and 62000 Game Points)

*Snap (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Down. Physical attack that may reduce defense by 20%)

*Chlorine (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Change. Physical attack that may poison target)

Sleep (3 AP; Category: ST Change. May put all opponents to sleep)

Silence (3 AP; Category: ST Change. Prevents spell-casting, but not physical skills, for all opponents)

Howling (0 AP; Category: ST Change. Confuses all opponents)

*Curse (13 AP; Category: Death. Halves all opponents' hit points)

6. Kaiser

This is the second dragon-form you get in the game... but it's berserk and uncontrollable until you find all the Dragon Summons, which you don't get until later. On the bright side, even uncontrolled, Ryuu *usually* uses KaiserBreath on the opponents each round, though he will occasionally attack a random target, sometimes your own allies.

You receive this form as part of the storyline - you have to *lose* a certain fight at the end of Chapter II. When Ryuu is reduced to 0 hp, instead of dying, he transforms into this form automatically (try to keep everyone else alive for that fight, difficult as it may be; you do get normal experience from it). When you can next control Ryuu, you also receive the DragonBreath attack for his Aura dragon.

KaiserBreath, it should be noted, bears a striking resemblance to the Bahamut ZERO summon from Final Fantasy VII. KaiserBreath gets a full sixteen hits normally, nineteen hits as the second attack in a combo, and a whopping twenty-two hits as the third attack in a combo (assuming the opponents are still alive at this point).

Note that in terms of pure stats, Weyr is almost a match for this form - Weyr gets identical Agility and Wisdom boots, slightly lower hit point and attack boots, and a *higher* defense boost.

Update: I've confirmed (yes, in a third trip through the game) that you only need the seven Dragon Evocations to control Kaiser, and having the dragon crystals is irrelevant. Still, why would you want to give away your cute little Mutant/Punk dragon to that sleazy trader? :)

Transformation Cost: 2 AP/Level

Game Description: Evolved dragon form. Superior abilities.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 300%

Attack: 200%

Defense: 150%

Agility: 150%

Wisdom: 200%

KaiserBreath (0 AP; Category: Breath. Non-elemental damage, sixteen hits.
Depends on current HP)

Aura Smash (3 AP; Category: Melee. A critical hit that ignores defense.

This can be more devastating than KaiserBreath against single enemies, especially if Kaiser's low on hit points, moreso in a combo)

Hwajeh (3 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 3 Fire Magic on one target)

Ahryu P'ung (3 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 3 Wind Magic on all targets)

Patoh Pah (3 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 3 Earth Magic on all targets)

Resurrect (30 AP; Category: Holy. Revives an ally with full HP)

*Sanctuary (13 AP; Category: Holy. Removes ability boosting spells on all foes *and* allies)

Upgrade: You want to upgrade Kaiser? Forget it. :)

B. Fou-Lu Dragon Forms

As a general note, I'm disappointed in how short a time you get to play as Fou-Lu. All of Fou-Lu's dragon forms are more powerful than Ryuu's, if only because he himself is at such an insanely high level when you start with him. But because you don't get to play as him too much, and his selection of forms is so limited, *and* you can pretty much blow through his scenarios no matter what form you pick (or, in many cases, even his normal form will be fine), I'm not going into much detail on the uses of these forms. Just have fun blasting every enemy you meet with them, and look forward to late in the game when Ryuu has this level of butt-kicking power. :)

Note also that the Astral, Serpent, and Tyrant dragons are simply recolored and retextured versions of Ryuu's Aura, Wyvern, and Kaiser dragons, respectively, though their breath attacks have entirely different (and somewhat shorter) animations than their counterparts.

Interestingly enough, none of Fou-Lu's forms except Tyrant provide a boost to Wisdom, and even Tyrant's boost is relatively minor. In fact, most of Fou-Lu's dragon forms provide smaller boosts than Ryuu's counterparts (with the exception of Behemoth - despite being the *same* as Ryuu's form, it has slightly higher bonuses - and Peist, which offers higher Attack and Agility bonuses than *any* of Ryuu's forms, including Kaiser!)

1. Astral Dragon

This is the first dragon you'll get in the game, even before getting Aura. You'll get this during Fou-Lu's first scenario, which is very early in the game; in fact, it's so early, it's really still part of the prologue before the game really gets underway. (As a guideline, I got this after about a half-hour of play my first time through, and I've managed to get it in less than fifteen minutes of play on subsequent runs through the starting scenes). It's Fou-Lu's only dragon for a long time, too. Again, though, Eraser is powerful enough to get you through any of his scenarios (even the last few), and, unlike Ryuu's Aura Dragon, the Astral Dragon gets his breath attack the first time you use him.

This form is also highly resistant to fire attacks. Do note, however, that like the Aura's DragonBreath, Eraser is affected by enemies' defense scores. Like Ryuu's Aura, this is my favorite form, even when he has Tyrant and Serpent available. I just like the way it looks. (In fact, since the Breath sequence is shorter than Aura's, and consequently less annoying to watch multiple times, I daresay this is my favorite form overall)

Transformation Cost: 1 AP/Level

Game description: Basic dragon form. Normal property.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 150%

Attack: 130%

Defense: 110%

Agility: 120%

Eraser (0 AP; Six non-elemental hits. Will be divided among multiple opponents)

*Frost Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Fire. Physical Water Attack)

*Wild Swing (0 AP; Category: Melee. Normal attack at 50% to 200% damage, selected randomly)

Bing (1 AP; Category: Water. Lv 1 Water Magic on one target)

Death (13 AP; Category: Death. Instant death attack)

Upgrade: None

2. Serpent

This is, in effect, Fou-Lu's version of the Wyvern. It has ice attacks instead of fire attacks, and it has attacks to reduce the opponent's abilities, rather than attacks to increase the party's abilities. (Ability reducers and status changers, however, don't work very often in this game). The American version features the odd name 'Waterspout' for its breath weapon, which is clearly a giant spiked ball of ice, as opposed to the Japanese name Hell-Blizzard (I thought it was typical Nintendo censorship until I remembered that this is a Playstation game. Given what I now know about the rest of the cuts in the game, it's apparently Typical Capcom USA Censorship). It is, of course, vulnerable to fire attacks.

The Water Gem that grants this form is located in the Sanctum, but you can't miss it anyway: it's blocking the Sanctum's exit. You'll have to get it to continue (Fou-Lu's speech as you pick up the Crystal is probably to point out its importance to you, so you know what to look for when you're controlling Ryuu's party again. That didn't stop me from missing most of the Crystals the first time through the game) :)

This is my second-favorite of Fou-Lu's forms.

Transformation Cost: 1.5 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic water dragon form. Water and assist magic.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 150%

Attack: 160%

Agility: 150%

Waterspout (0 AP; Category: Breath. Water damage, multiple hits. Depends on current HP)

*Frost Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Water. Physical Water Attack)

Bing (1 AP; Category: Water. Lv 1 Water Magic on one target)

Bing'ah (2 AP; Category: Water. Lv 2 Water Magic on one target)

*Snap (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Down. Physical attack that reduces defense by 20%)

Upgrade: Peist

I didn't get to use this one much (again, Fou-Lu's scenarios are so short, and I didn't really have much time to use this form), but the one boss I did use it on went down quickly under a barrage of Waterspouts. He gains the ability to reduce the opponent's offense (again, though, such attacks don't work too well), as well as the level 3 Water Dragon-magic spell.

Here's an oddity... Wind + Water + Pa Bing'ah combine to form Mjollnir (not **quite** as badly misspelled as it was in BoF3), but since Ryuu can't cast Pa Bing'ah with any of his dragon-forms, and Fou-Lu never has any allies to cast Wind and Water spells to start the combo, this combination is **only** possible via Gameshark.

I've finally tested this combo myself, by 'Sharking Pa Bing'ah directly onto Ryuu's Skill list. Mjollnir, for the record, isn't as good as Ryuu's dragon-combos. It only hits once per enemy, has no special effects, and does **less** damage than Thunderstorm, about half as much.

Note that the Agility and Attack boosts for this form are higher than those for any of Ryuu's forms, but Fou-Lu gets no Wisdom boost from this form.

Game Description: Evolved water dragon form. Water and assist magic.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 200%

Attack: 210%

Defense: 110%

Agility: 180%

Waterspout (0 AP; Category: Breath. Water damage, multiple hits. Depends on current HP)

*Frost Strike (2 AP; Category: Melee/Water. Physical Water Attack)

Bing (1 AP; Category: Water. Lv 1 Water Magic on one target)

Bing'ah (2 AP; Category: Water. Lv 2 Water Magic on one target)

Pa Bing'ah (3 AP; Category: Water. Lv 3 Water Magic on all targets)

*Snap (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Down. Physical attack that reduces defense by 20%)

*SwordBreaker (2 AP; Category: Melee/ST Down. Physical attack that reduces attack by 20%)

3. Behemoth

This form is nearly identical to Ryuu's, and he gets it when Ryuu does. I'll repeat the ability list here for completeness' sake. (Fou-Lu can also use Ryuu's Myrmidon/Knight and Mutant/Punk forms, but only through use of a Gameshark, so I won't include them).

Note that Fou-Lu's Behemoth form has slightly different stat bonuses than Ryuu's, namely having slightly higher attack power.

Transformation Cost: 1.5 AP/Level

Game Description: Basic earth dragon form. High defense.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 220%

Attack: 150%

Defense: 140%

Agility: 50%

Wisdom: 50%

MeteorStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Earth damage, nine hits. Damage depends on current HP)

*Searing Sand (2 AP; Category: Melee/Earth. Physical Earth Attack)

Patoh (1 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 1 Earth Magic on all targets)

Chi Patoh (2 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 2 Earth Magic on one target)

*Counter (1 AP; Category: Lv Up. Auto-counters physical attacks for the rest of the round. Note that since the Behemoth is very slow, this is useless unless your opponents are even slower)

Upgrade: Mammoth

I finally got a chance to try out Fou-Lu's Mammoth form. It's identical to Ryuu's. Powerful but sloooooow. And slow is bad since Fou-Lu is alone for his scenarios, so you'll probably want to get first strike. The percentage boosts below have been confirmed, at least.

I don't like Behemoth/Mammoth enough to use it for Ryuu. When I'm using Fou-Lu, I like to use those dragon forms unique to him. :)

Game Description: Evolved earth dragon form. High defense.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 350% (usually 9999)

Attack: 160%
Defense: 160%
Agility: 50%
Wisdom: 50%

MeteorStrike (0 AP; Category: Breath. Earth damage, multiple hits.
Depends on current HP)

*Searing Sand (2 AP; Category: Melee/Earth. Physical Earth Attack)

Patoh (1 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 1 Earth Magic on all targets)

Chi Patoh (2 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 2 Earth Magic on one target)

Patoh Pah (3 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 3 Earth Magic on all targets)

*Counter (1 AP; Category: Lv Up. Auto-counters physical attacks for the
rest of the round)

*Blitz (0 AP; Category: Melee. Damage depends on current HP and a bit of
luck. Multiple hits. Reduces user's hp to 3/4 of previous total)

4. Tyrant

Fou-Lu's version of the Kaiser. It's nearly identical, except for its breath attack, its element (it has a Level 3 Water attack instead of Level 3 Fire), and, as befits the Dark Dragons, Death instead of Resurrect. Note that the ability increases aren't as dramatic as one might expect for his Ultimate Dragon Form (especially compared to Ryuu's Kaiser), but the HP boost makes this form's breath attack particularly powerful. Note I put 300% instead of 9999 hp in previous versions; I'm just guessing here, based on Ryuu's bonus and the fact that max hp can't go past 9999 (like Fou-Lu's Mammoth form, which also has 9999 hp)

Fou-Lu has Tyrant automatically the first time you control him after Ryuu gets Kaiser (similar to Ryuu getting Aura when Fou-Lu unleashes Astral), at the very start of Chapter III. This breath attack *also* resembles Bahamut ZERO (the whole aiming-an-attack-from-orbit motif).

Transformation Cost: 2 AP/Level

Game Description: Evolved dragon form. Superior abilities.

Dragon ability bonuses

Hit Points: 300% (assumed, 9999 for all practical purposes)

Attack: 150%

Defense: 120%

Agility: 150%

Wisdom: 120%

Dark Wave (0 AP; Category: Breath. Non-elemental damage, sixteen hits.
Depends on current HP)

Aura Smash (3 AP; Category: Melee. A critical hit that ignores defense.

This can be more devastating than Dark Wave against single enemies, especially if Tyrant is getting low on HP)

Pa Bing'ah (3 AP; Category: Water. Lv 3 Water Magic on all targets)

Ahryu P'ung (3 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 3 Wind Magic on all targets)

Patoh Pah (3 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 3 Earth Magic on all targets)

Death (13 AP; Category: Death. Kills target instantly. Maybe)

*Sanctuary (8 AP; Category: Holy. Dispels all Assist magic effects on
allies and opponents)

Upgrade: It's not happening. Sorry :)

C. Infini

The most powerful dragon in the game, bar none. For the sake of avoiding spoilers, I'll leave out how to get it entirely, as well as who gets it. It has Tyrant's breath attack, all three levels of all four elemental dragon spells, and a unique ability, Soul Rend, that never misses.

In appearance, Infini is just the Tyrant polygonal model, only a different color. Also, its four 'wings' are twisted, and there's a holographic 'peacock's tail' hovering behind it. Its Dark Wave attack is identical to Tyrant's in terms of animation, only it shows Infini unleashing the attack.

Updated notes: To clear up some confusion, as the set stats and the sheer power of the spells may suggest, this is not a normal dragon form; it's an "Event" dragon, usable during only one particular fight. I'm simply not going to tell you which fight. :)

If you really want to know, and don't mind spoilers, e-mail me. Or just read one of the full walkthrough FAQs. :)

Transformation cost: Spoiler!

Game description: Spoiler!

Dragon abilities:

Hit points: 9999

Ability points: 999

Attack: 646

Defense: 402

Agility: 286

Wisdom: 500

Dark Wave (0 AP; Category: Breath. Non-elemental damage, multiple hits.

Depends on current HP)

Soul Rend (13 AP; No category. Reduces all opponents to 1 hp. Never misses. No fair) :)

Hwa (1 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 1 Fire Magic on one target)

Jeh (2 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 2 Fire Magic on all targets)

Hwajeh (3 AP; Category: Fire. Lv 3 Fire Magic on one target)

P'ung (1 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 1 Wind Magic on one target)

Nah P'ung (2 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 2 Wind Magic on all targets)

Ahryu P'ung (3 AP; Category: Wind. Lv 3 Wind Magic on all targets)

Bing (1 AP; Category: Water. Lv 1 Water Magic on one target)

Bing'ah (2 AP; Category: Water. Lv 2 Water Magic on one target)

Pa Bing'ah (3 AP; Category: Water. Lv 3 Water Magic on all targets)

Patoh (1 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 1 Earth Magic on all targets)

Chi Patoh (2 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 2 Earth Magic on one target)

Patoh Pah (3 AP; Category: Earth. Lv 3 Earth Magic on all targets)

ii. Dragon Evocation

The game's name for Summon spells. All of these cost 0 AP to cast, but they can only be used once per rest at an inn. Resting in camp will not recharge these spells. These are all Category: Breath, and the attack summons hit multiple times like Ryuu's breath attacks. Like the breath attacks for the dragon transformations, these will get more hits as part of a combo. To acquire a dragon summon, you simply have to speak to the dragon's human-form avatar.

You will automatically receive P'ung Ryong's summon, Rainstorm, as part of the normal course of play. The rest you must find, but most of them aren't difficult. These are listed in the approximate order you can receive them.

I also have to say that the character designers have an odd idea what constitutes a 'dragon' this time around. Sheesh.

Rainstorm: From P'ung Ryong, the Wind Dragon.

Where: Automatic. You get P'ung Ryong to help you at Sinchon near the end of Chapter II. (This is the **only** Evocation or Transformation you get to use before Chapter 3, not, of course, including Ryuu's Aura).

Description: The sky dragon (looks like an eel with fins and tusks to me) swoops between the clouds, where lightning flashes, then rises above them to where the opponents are waiting on a small piece of grassy land (FF7 Neo Bahamut, anyone?) A tear falls from the dragon's eye, which soon turns into a rainstorm. Holy damage to all opponents, eight hits, based on **their** HP, not yours. Even after multiple viewings, this is one of my favorites.

Healing Wind: From Cho Ryong, the Grass Dragon.

Where: The Golden Plains. Talk to Tarhn, who'll tell you how to find her (it **is** female, isn't it? Its human avatar definitely looks female, though Tarhn refers to it as "he" and "him"), then head into the Plain itself. Head east to the big rock, then follow the glowing bird. You'll know the bird I mean once you see it: it has a circular aura of light around it that can be seen from quite a distance, and it's impossible to mistake for any of the ordinary birds flying around. If you're not sure whether it's the right bird, then it's not the right bird. It'll stop at Cho Ryong's location (you should be able to see a transparent image of the dragon when you get close).

Description: I like the dragon design, but the summon itself has questionable usefulness. A magic circle appears, in the middle of which Cho Ryong appears and unfurls her wings. A small woodland glade springs up around the party, and sparkles of light restore all living members of the party to full HP and normal status. (This would be more useful if it wasn't limited to one use). It's a good 'emergency' healing spell, though, but it doesn't bring dead party members back to life. It's basically the spell version of the Moon Tears item, or a really really powerful version of FaerieBreath.

Mud Flow: From Ni Ryong, the Mud Dragon.

Where: Really easy to find. Go into the ? area just north of the Dam, where the Frog Lady sang you a song about dragons much earlier in the game. You may need to rotate the camera a bit to see Ni Ryong (because he's really, really small), but he's right there in front of you.

Description: The ground turns to mud, while a magic circle locks the opponents in place. Ni Ryong, a semi-transparent earthworm-like creature with huge anime eyes, bursts out of the muck (actually, the "mud" ground is nearly indistinguishable from the "desert" ground for Sa Ryong's summon), and roars once, while the ground begins to shift and move until a huge tidal wave (FF7 Leviathan, anyone?) of mud covers the opponents. Does water and earth-based damage, twelve hits. (A movie file of this Evocation is at psx.ign.com).

Onslaught: From Sa Ryong, the Sand Dragon.

Where: On the Sandflyer route from Shikk to Shyde (or vice-versa),

there'll be an area in the bottom center that's cut off from the rest of the map. Jump a sand dune into that area, and drive into the oasis in the center. Sa Ryong is right there. (He's actually really easy to find, you just have to know where to look).

Description: I love this one. The ground turns to desert, a magic circle immobilizes the enemies, and Sa Ryong can be seen burrowing just under the sand from a distance. When it gets close, it disappears entirely, before bursting out directly under the enemies, sending them flying. It then proceeds to slam into them, one by one, while in the air, sending them off into the distance. (If there are fewer than six opponents, it'll slam into them more than once, batting them around until it finally knocks them away). Finally, the background shifts back to the regular battle scene, and the enemies come crashing down. Causes six hits worth of Wind damage and may cause confusion.

Holy Circle: From Su Ryong, the Tree Dragon.

Where: South of the town of Shikk (between Shikk and the Checkpoint) is a random-? area (the ? that normally signifies fights) with three exits. Leave by the exit that branches off to the side, and a new path will open up to a ? area, where Su Ryong will give you his power.

Description: Hands down the most useless dragon summon in the game. It is, in fact, in the running for the most useless spell ever (other than the ones that are obviously *meant* to be useless, like Feign Swing or Egghead. Heck, Egghead is less useless than this). The surrounding area turns into a forest (more heavily wooded than Cho Ryong's summon), and Su Ryong - a tree with a face, six little insect-like legs, and dragonfly-like wings (Wings? It's rooted to the ground. Why does it need wings?) - casts an octagonal solid around your party, with mystic symbols on each side. This makes your party invincible for the rest of the round. Hopefully you didn't attack last in the round. (This may have been useful if you had EX turns like in BoF3, but sadly, such is not the case).

Flood Tide: From Hae Ryong, the Sea Dragon.

Where: Tough sucker to find (look for the four rocks to the left of Shikk in an upside-down L formation. Maneuver the ship in there, hit the triangle button, and listen for the 'Dragon' music - if you've gotten the other summons, you know the music I mean, or if you have the Faerie Music Shop, it's the song entitled Seeing Is Believing). The second time through the game I found it just below that rock formation, rather than inside it, so I gather the exact spot is somewhat random.

Description: Hae Ryong, who looks like nothing so much as the Loch Ness Monster with a clam shell and octopus tentacles for forelimbs (imagine the unholy union of Lapras, Shellder, Octillery, and Blastoise, and you'll get the idea) rises from the depths. Two tubes on his shoulders twitch and aim, and he blasts the opponents (immobilized on a magic circle again) with water. Causes six hits of Wind/Water damage and may stun the enemies.

Fulguration: From the Nameless One, the Rock Dragon.

Where: In the River area south of Chiqua, there's a man sitting near the exit. Chat with him for a bit. Talk about dragons, tell him you've seen them, that they can look like anything, and that they look like grass and

rocks, and he'll tell you about something weird in the Quarry nearby that may have been a dragon. (You can also get this line of conversation by talking about traveling, saying you come from over the sea, and saying you saw dragons). You can also get a few items out of this - play with the responses for them. (The only one I remember offhand is talk about traveling, tell him you're from overseas, and tell him you're on the run from the Empire, and you'll get a Power Food out of it) There aren't any 'wrong' answers; you can always start the conversation over. When you get back to the world map, a path to a ? area will have opened up, where the Nameless One awaits. This will be the last summon you get in the game (assuming you got them all when they were first available).

Description: It's a jellyfish, I tell you, a giant stone jellyfish. It extends its - limbs? stone tentacles? whatever - and electricity arcs between them, forming a huge gravity well which it shoots downwards at the targets, who are immobilized on a magic circle. The ball then explodes as it hits the ground. Does eight hits of gravity-elemental (what does that mean, exactly?) damage based on the opponents' HP. Use this first, to soften up powerful enemies. It will never deal the final blow, as it takes a small percentage of the opponent's HP in damage. (I couldn't kill NutTroops with it towards the end of the game, even).

iii. Miscellany

A. Dragon Abilities Quick Reference List

Percentages are proportional to Ryuu/Fou-Lu's abilities in human form (i.e., if Ryuu has 200 HP in human form, he'll have $200 \times 1.5 = 300$ as Aura, $200 \times 0.5 = 100$ as Henner, etc. If Ryuu has a 200 Attack while wielding a weapon with 50 power, then he'll have an Attack score of $150 \times 1.2 + 50 = 230$ as Aura). Note that the Infini dragon has set values for his stats and HP.

Astral (Fou-Lu): 150% HP, 130% Atk, 110% Def, 120% Agi
Aura (Ryuu): 150% HP, 120% Atk, 110% Def, 120% Wis
Behemoth (Ryuu): 220% HP, 140% Atk, 140% Def, 50% Agi, 50% Wis
Behemoth (Fou-Lu): 220% HP, 150% Atk, 140% Def, 50% Agi, 50% Wis
Infini: 9999 HP, 999 AP, 646 Atk, 402 Def, 286 Agi, 500 Wis
Kaiser (Ryuu): 300% HP, 200% Atk, 150% Def, 150% Agi, 200% Wis
Knight (Ryuu): 180% HP, 140% Atk, 130% Def, 150% Agi, 120% Wis
Mammoth (Both): 350% HP, 160% Atk, 160% Def, 50% Agi, 50% Wis
Mutant (Ryuu): 50% HP, 50% Atk, 80% Agi, 180% Wis
Myrmidon (Ryuu): 150% HP, 120% Atk, 120% Def, 120% Agl
Peist (Fou-Lu): 200% HP, 210% Atk, 110% Def, 180% Agi
Punk (Ryuu): 50% HP, 50% Atk, 250% Wis
Serpent (Fou-Lu): 150% HP, 160% Atk, 150% Agi
Tyrant (Fou-Lu): 300% HP, 150% Atk, 120% Def, 150% Agi, 120% Wis
Weyr (Ryuu): 200% HP, 180% Atk, 170% Def, 150% Agi, 200% Wis
Wyvern (Ryuu): 150% HP, 120% Atk, 120% Def, 130% Wis

Best form for Hit Points: Mammoth (350%, Both)

Best form for Attack: Peist (210%, Fou-Lu); Kaiser (200%, Ryuu)

Best form for Defense: Weyr (170%, Ryuu); Mammoth (160%, Both)

Best form for Agility: Peist (180%, Fou-Lu); tie between Knight, Kaiser, and Weyr (150%, Ryuu)

Best form for Wisdom: Punk (250%, Ryuu); Tyrant (120%, Fou-Lu - this is the *only* one of his forms that gets a Wisdom boost)

B. Dragon Skills Quick Reference List

This lists all the skills you can learn from Ryuu's dragon forms, and which form has them. Note that you can learn many of these skills from enemies long before you have the appropriate dragon-form available, but learning from Ryuu's dragons is often the easiest option for some of these (Shadowwalk or Curse, for instance).

Blitz (Mammoth)
Chlorine (Mutant, Punk)
Cleave (Knight)
Counter (Behemoth, Mammoth)
Curse (Punk)
Flame Strike (Aura, Wyvern, Weyr)
Sanctuary (Kaiser)
Searing Sand (Behemoth, Mammoth)
Shadowwalk (Knight)
Snap (Mutant, Punk)
Spirit Blast (Myrmidon)
Wind Strike (Myrmidon, Knight)

The following skills are not directly learnable from Fou-Lu's dragons, but it is possible to learn them through other means (including, in two cases, from Ryuu's dragon-forms).

Frost Strike (Astral, Serpent, Peist)
Sanctuary (Tyrant) - also Kaiser
Snap (Serpent, Peist) - also Mutant
SwordBreaker (Peist)
Wild Swing (Astral)

C. Breath of Fire 1 Comparison

Well, I finished the game, and I think I see *exactly* how this one fits in with the others - and, no, it's not an alternate universe. (Of course, that presumes all my guesses, assumptions, and deductions are on-target. If you've finished the game and want to hear my theory and reasoning, or if you *haven't* finished the game and want to hear my reasoning and don't mind a ton of spoilers, e-mail me).

But here are a few ways the game harkens back to BoF1 in terms of Game Play, and occasionally in Storyline.

(1) Nina. She has large wings and she can fly. More notable, she's the group's healer, a position she hasn't had since the original game. Granted, she doesn't have all the defensive spells she had in BoF1 (Cray got most of them here), and Scias has a few healing spells as well (though he gets them at later levels than Nina does), but Nina will be the main healer. (As a side note, The Grassrunner clan are usually good healers - Bow, Momo, and Scias are all part of this clan).

(2) The plot of Breath of Fire 1 is really rather linear: Ryuu leaves home to find his missing sister, who he believes is being held by the Empire. Replace 'Ryuu' with 'Nina', and you have the opening plot of BoF4. The BoF4 plot isn't quite as linear, as you get distracted at least a half-dozen times with more important matters, but finding a main character's sister is integral to the premise of the game. (In both cases, as well, it turns out to have nothing to do with the final showdown at the end of the game)

(3) A minor feature: The behind-the-back-perspective separate-screen battle sequences from BoF1 and 2 are back, and the fact your characters actually run up and hit the enemies rather than stand in place and swing is back from the original game.

(4) The conflict between the Light and Dark Dragons definitely takes center stage, as it did in BoF1. I still don't know if Fou-Lu and Emperor Zog are related, though I have my suspicions on how the Imperial Capital at Chedo and the Imperial Capital at 'Scande' (American name; Japanese is just 'Imperial Capital') are related. In BoF2 and 3, the conflict between the Light and Dark Dragons were non-existent (though you have to fight a Dark Dragon in both games, it's not the point of the game).

(5) Ryuu's spell list. In BoF1, he had nothing but Dragon transformation spells. In BoF2 he got a few minor healing spells, and in BoF3 he became the best healer in the game (which was highly annoying, since I was saving his AP for dragon transformations. And people wonder why I like Momo so much). In BoF4, once again, his only spells are Meditation (i.e., Dragon Transformation), and the Dragon Summons.

(6) The battle system. Breath of Fire 1 had all eight characters participating in every battle, and everyone got experience from every fight, whether they actually attacked or not. Switching in and out was a bit more awkward (you could only switch one character per round), and you couldn't switch out Ryuu in dragon-form (why would you want to?), but BoF4 brings back never having to decide who's coming with you and who's going to get stuck never gaining a level. As a completely irrelevant side-note, why did the 16-bit games have more characters in the party? BoF had eight, BoF2 had nine, while BoF3 and 4 have only six (seven if you count Teepo or Fou-Lu). Further, BoF and BoF2 allowed four characters in the active party, while 3 and 4 allow only three.

(7) The Music. This is also a throwback to BoF2, but it was lacking in BoF3. The battle music changes during the course of the game... albeit not the same way as previous games. In BoF1 and 2, it changed permanently after certain story points. In BoF4, there's one battle and boss theme for the Eastern continent (including the 'Etc.' areas on the Shift menu), and another one for the West (at the start of the game, Ryuu's party will have the Eastern music, and Fou-Lu the Western). Incidentally, in the Faerie Music Shop, these tunes are listed as By The Numbers and Bastard Sword for the Eastern battle and boss music, and Fighters and Battling Gods for the Western. Bringing Home A Win and Take The Money And Run are the two post-battle victory themes. I was rather disappointed not to be able to listen to the battle and boss music in the Faerie music shop in BoF3; I'm glad to see they rectified that here.

D. Mini-Game Madness

I'd like some help in completing this section, because I only know of a few replayable mini-games. This is, of course, dragon-related because you need a certain number of Game Points to upgrade your dragons. Your Fishing Points, I have to note, are entirely separate from your Game Points, so you can't go fishing in an attempt to upgrade those dragons :) Keep in mind these points are for completing the mini-games the second and subsequent times; you get far more points the first time you play them - *ten times* as much, in fact (so try to get them right the first time. They're not as pointless - no pun intended - as they appear).

Oh, and don't smack people with your sword for 'easy' money. You

lose Game Points for that. (Okay, only one Game Point per smack, but still...). For that reason, try not to keep Ershin in front in towns. When running, he does his headbutt automatically when hitting an obstacle (such as other people).

1. Sandflyer Jumping: You get points for beating your high score when traveling between any two points in your sandspeeder. More accurately, your high score for each of the six courses are kept as part of your Game Points. When you get a higher score, only the difference is added to your Game Points.

The points themselves are gotten by doing trick jumps off the sand dunes (and, of course, landing safely). Beating your record score is what's important; your time is irrelevant for Game Points. I might be able to get a few hundred thousand points right here. :)

Update: I've found that you can, indeed, get a lot of points here, but not an unlimited number. There are six courses (between the three points Kyoin, Shyde and the Shikk region - going in the opposite direction counts as a different course for scorekeeping purposes), and you can get a maximum of 4000 points on each one, for a grand total of 24,000 Game Points. This alone will be enough to upgrade two of the four dragons.

Update #2, sort of: I've heard that it's possible to get 6,000 points per course, but as yet I haven't managed it. If anyone knows how it's done, let me know. (Though I suspect you get 1000 points for each complete revolution you make while in the air after a jump).

Update #3, sort of: Supposedly, the number of points you get is dependant on your tricks *and* your time. Do one good trick and complete the track really quickly, and scores of over 10,000 are supposed to be possible. Though I have to warn you: I haven't managed this myself. If anyone wants to confirm this for themselves, go right ahead; but the time may be better spent chasing pigsheep into a pen. :)

2. Move Them Boxes: At the Wharf, you can try to get those ten crates on the ship again in three minutes. On replays, this scores 10 points per box placed, or 20 points per box placed in the light blue square. That's 200 points total, if you place all ten boxes in the blue squares, plus a time bonus if you complete it with 30 or more seconds on the clock. I've never gotten more than 380 points out of this, but it's quick and easy, if rather tedious.

Note that you can't replay the barrel-moving game at the Wharf.

3. Catching The Sheep: If they're sheep, why are they going 'oink'? Oh, no matter. Just like capturing Tak the brown chicken. (If you don't know what I mean, then you haven't gotten far enough to access this mini-game anyway). Drive the red mother sheep into the pen to end this game. There are twenty sheep all told - nineteen white and one red. You get 10 points per white sheep you drive in first, 200 points for the red sheep, and a bonus depending on how many sheep you get in before chasing the mother sheep in. There's a potential of 690 points here, but I'm not sure it's worth it, in terms of time spent vs. points gotten. (I usually wind up spending five minutes chasing the darn sheep around, before I finally get fed up and chase the brown one in the pen, for a grand total of 200 points).

Of course, the first time (when you're trying to capture chickens instead of sheep), and everything is worth ten times as much, then it's definitely worth it to get the full 6900 points out of this, since you're not timed, and you have to complete it *anyway* to move on.

Update: Maybe they *are* pigs. Or sheep. Or... pigsheep!

4. White Water Rafting: In Mount Ryft, ride the raft and pick up the bags for 20 points each. There's not much to earn here. The most I've gotten is 350 points (including a time bonus), and you have to run through a small

enemy-infested area just to get to the raft. Still, this is the easiest and quickest of the games, and may be the most worthwhile in the long run.

E. Etymology, or, What The Heck Is A Peist?

Aura: An intangible quality, or an invisible radiation. Probably refers to Ryu's draconic aura solidifying into a physical form.

Astral: Relating to the stars; also relating to the 'astral plane', a plane of pure thought where spirits are said to dwell. In the original Japanese game, this dragon is called Spiritual.

Behemoth: The Bible refers to an animal by this name; it's only described as large.

Infini: The first three syllables of Infinity, of course. In the Japanese game, its name is simply Infinity.

Kaiser: Of course this is the name of the German monarchy once upon a time, taken from the name (Julius) Caesar, but from 1951-1953, the Kaiser Dragon was an American-made car ("Kaiser" being the make and "Dragon" the model). Coincidence?

Knight: Camelot! Camelot!! Camelot!!! (It's only a model.) Sssh!

Mammoth: If it's bigger than a behemoth, it's got to be mammoth in size. :) This dragon is known as the Bandersnatch in Japan, a creature from Lewis ("Alice's Adventures In Wonderland") Carrol's poem Jabberwocky, which appears in the sequel to Alice, "Through The Looking Glass".

Mutant: To pull a definition from my dictionary: "One that is suggestive of a genetic mutant, as in bizarre appearance, inaptitude, or genesis in an unhealthy environment." Flawed Gem. Unhealthy environment. Yeah. This form is called Henner in Japan (literally transcribed from the katakana as Hen'naa). Anyone have any ideas what that means?

Myrmidon: In Greek mythology, a member of the Thessalian people, a warlike bunch who followed Achilles without question. The word now usually refers to a mindless follower, though I suspect the Capcom translators had the "warlike" idea in mind. In the Japanese game, this form is called simply the Warrior.

Peist: I'll just quote <http://www.polenth.demon.co.uk/dragon/typemyth.html> - "The peist are the dragons of Ireland. These dragons are water-dwellers. When St. Patrick drove the snakes out of Ireland, he imprisoned the peist in their home, the water." This dragon is called the Jabberwock in the Japanese BoF4, also taken from Jabberwocky.

Punk: I suspect the name 'Punk' is misspelling of 'Puk' (though this carries over from the Japanese version, where it's also called Punk). A Puk (also spelled Puuk, Puky, and Puki) is a small quadrupedal 'household' dragon in stories from Europe. "Pukapuka" may be related to this, too.

Serpent: Snakes. Why does it always have to be snakes?

Tyrant: A ruler without peer, without restrictions, and usually without mercy. Fou-Lu to a T. And that T stands for Tyrant. :)

Weyr: This is an odd choice, as the word usually refers to a dragon's home (most notably in Anne McCaffery's Pern books), not to a dragon itself. In the original Japanese game, this dragon is known as the Jubjub, again named for a Jabberwocky creature. The Jubjub also puts in a more visible appearance in Carrol's book-length story poem The Hunting of the Snark.

Wyvern: A wyvern is just what it appears as in the game: a four-limbed dragon (two legs and two wings, rather than the standard four legs and two wings). Despite their names, the Weyr, Serpent, Peist, Dragonne (a boss enemy), and possibly even the Kaiser and Tyrant forms are all technically wyverns.

F. 'Sharking

I'm not going to give you codes for the dragons here; there are other, better sources for that. I'm going to note a few things about what you can and can't do, even with Gameshark.

1. You can't Shark dragon-forms directly onto Ryuu and Fou-Lu. You can put the name of a dragon onto their Spell or Skill lists (e.g., Astral or Aura), where it seems to be a 0 AP spell, but it's always greyed-out in battle. You *have* to go through the Meditate screen to access the dragon-forms. This doesn't even depend on giving a dragon to the 'wrong' character - 'Sharking Aura onto Ryuu is as useless as 'Sharking Astral. (More's the pity - I'd rather place Fou-Lu's dragon forms directly onto Ryuu, rather than just sticking the Breath attacks on him).
2. Not surprisingly, you can't give dragon-forms to anyone but Ryuu or Fou-Lu. If you 'Shark Meditate onto someone else's spell list, the game will freeze when you try to use it - oddly, the game freezes at the point *after* it shows the close-up of the (wrong) character (I 'Sharked Meditate onto Ershin; it showed the close-up of Fou-Lu) - apparently, that dragon-form isn't as standard as I thought it was, even though it looks the same for both characters. Ershin doesn't have a corresponding dragon form, so it crashed when it tried to return to the normal battle screen. The same goes for the other characters (including the close-up of Fou-Lu).
3. You *can*, however, give breath attacks to any of the characters. So while only Fou-Lu and Ryuu can become the Hybrid, any of them can transform fully for the Breath attacks. A 'Sharked Stardrop has no visible level, but the level is calculated normally. Giving a breath attack to Ryuu early in the game will result in very little damage (which may, actually, be why you don't get Dragonbreath until so late in the game - in the early going, it'd be useless); Nina never does much with a breath attack, either. (For my 'Sharked fourth time through the game, I gave each character a breath attack based on their element. Ershin got Stardrop, and Ryuu got Eraser and Dark Wave. The rest you can probably figure out) :)
4. You can give any character the Dragon-Combo Magic (Super Nova, Catastrophe, Earthbreaker, Mjollnir) - they're 0 AP, no description, with the symbol for combination magic (three circles of different colors). Interestingly, Ershin (who I gave these spells to) has a voice clip for Catastrophe, when there's no way in a normal game she'd be able to cast Catastrophe. As an aside, you can easily give normal combination magic to any character, as well - again, they cost 0 AP, and have the three-circle symbol that appears in the Combo meter during such attacks.

5. You can't 'Shark new dragons onto Ryuu early in the game. Even if you use a Key Item code to give him all the Dragon Gems, he will still only have Aura. If you gave away the Flawed Gem, 'sharking it back onto your item list will not give you the Mutant/Punk form back. I suspect that they need to be "turned on" on the Dragon List directly, and I don't yet know of a code for that.

6. The 'Evolved' dragons' breath attacks are distinct from their basic forms. For example, Serpent's Waterspout is 3E, but Peist's is at F6. Even Infini's Dark Wave is different from Tyrant's. (4B for Tyrant, F4 for Infini). For the record, it was Infini's version of Dark Wave I 'Sharked onto Ryuu (mentioned in #3 above) :) (There's also two versions of Aura Smash, but I can't tell what the difference is, other than one has 'Holy' in its description, while the other one seems to cut off a word or two). This only makes a difference with Stardrop - since the version of the Breath determines the level, and consequently, the number of hits.

7. When 'sharking *non*-dragon moves onto your characters, don't try to give them any moves unique to polygonal bosses; your characters simply don't have the proper animation frames, and the game will crash. If more than one (different-looking 2-D sprite) enemy can use the move, chances are your characters can use them without harm (though some moves, like Giant Growth, still freeze the game). The sole exception to this is Mjollnir, which, while only used by the Dragonne boss, is just a combo-magic spell, and doesn't depend on specific animation from the enemy itself. But Mystic Fire? Frost Breath? Power Flux? Forget it.

8. Don't try to put Fou-Lu in your party, unless you put him in alone. The game will crash if you try to give Fou-Lu any companions in the party. And, as I said earlier, he *does* have the Myrmidon/Knight and Mutant/Punk forms if you put him in your party after Ryuu gets those dragons.

While I don't condone using a GS to get through a game for the first time, it, like the Genie before it, makes playing with the game in later treks through it more entertaining.

I also assume that all the things I mentioned above that you can't do can, in fact, be done, but not with the codes currently available. I'm currently looking for codes to 'Shark Fou-Lu dragons directly onto Ryuu's dragon list, but it's turned up empty so far.

Next I think I'm going to give the dragon-combo spells to all the characters, just to see which ones have voice clips for them. If any. (Fou-Lu, for example, has no voice clips for *any* combo spells, dragon or otherwise, while Ershin has a voice clip for Catastrophe, but not the others).

Bonus BoF4 Rant: If Capcom of America *had* to remove a decapitation scene, why did they do it by ending the scene in the middle before the decapitation would have taken place? Would it have been that difficult for the character to blink and disappear, and have the scene go on as normal? (I mind less the removal of a scene of Nina and Ursula bathing, because I didn't even notice it was missing. The premature end of the decapitation scene left me scratching my head and wondering what just happened).

For that matter, they delayed the game an extra month, could *someone* have translated the end credits? (Actually, this is all more of

a Capcom of America rant than a general BoF4 one - the game itself is excellent. I just feel slightly gypped by this slipshod job of localizing it)

Rant update: This is compounded by the fact that they left out a spell from the Japanese version: Scias's Identify spell. Similar to the Square-button examination of a foe, but it shows *exact* hit points (current and maximum), as well as a (slightly garbled) list of weaknesses - the list being garbled because they didn't finish converting the move, and instead just decided to take it off of Scias's spell lists. Lazy move, Capcom USA, just lazy.

Plus, the decapitation scene, as I understand it, was about as graphic and bloody as Akuma's Shun Goku Satsu - that is to say, not graphic at all. Just a red screen, with black silhouettes of the two characters.

Bonus BoF Wish List: A Breath of Fire Collection disk for the PSX, featuring BoF 1 and 2, both with new translations (Square did a shoddy job with BoF1, changing names at will, and BoF2 combined horrible English with translators who couldn't make up their minds whether to use Square's names or not. So Winlan was changed back to Windia and Tyr became Miria - they didn't add the y's to Wyndia and Myria until BoF3 - but Deis was still named Bleu, and they used Square's naming convention for the Cure spells).

Fun fact: BoF2 and BoF3 have almost exactly the same spells, but because a completely different team translated them, they have entirely different names for almost all of them. For example, Cure1, Cure2, Cure3, Cure4, and CureX in BoF2 are Heal, Rejuvenate, Vitalize, Restore, and Vigor in BoF3 (and 4)

The ultimate feature for this non-existent Collection would be the ability to mix and match characters between the games once they've both been finished (imagine fighting Deatheven with the G.Dragon/Kaiser *and* Rudra/Kaiser), but I doubt that'll happen. :)

Bonus BoF cheer: To Capcom of Japan, for remaking BoF1 for the Gameboy Advanced. If the USA branch doesn't screw it up somehow, it'll be great to see a remix of the old game.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Capcom of Japan, for this excellent game. Keep making them, and find someone less squeamish to translate them to English. :)

Happy Matt (happy_matt@msn.com), who confirmed the dragon system for me several months before the game was released, and whose FAQ provided the move lists for dragon forms I hadn't yet gotten, as well as the Levels for Stardrop and the 50,000 Game Point plateau for upgrades. (His FAQ is also a good guide to 'what the heck are they yelling?' as the party casts their spells, since what they're yelling are the Japanese spell names. It's still one of the better BoF4 FAQs available, even though it's for the Japanese version).

IGN, specifically psx.ign.com, which put up movies of Ryu's transformation, the Wyvern's Gigaflame breath, and the Mud Flow evocation months before the game came out. (They're still there, as far as I know).

Anyone I forgot. :)

