



# Legends of Localization

Book 2:  
EarthBound

Clyde Mandelin

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## ローカライズの伝説 第二巻 マザー 2

クライド・マンデリン

### Welcome to the Book Preview

This preview showcases only a few samples of the 420+ pages found in the complete book. Although the book looks at *EarthBound* in great detail, it also covers many other topics and touches on many other games. Even if you're not familiar with *EarthBound* or much of an *EarthBound* fan, you'll find a lot of fascinating information within these pages!

**\*NOTE: The images in this preview have been compressed to make them more internet friendly, they are not representational of the quality of the final product.**



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## Special Features

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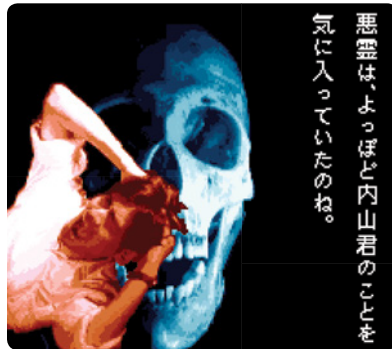
## The Pieces of a Video Game Localization

Video game localization is much more than just translating a bunch of text and calling it a day. A complete game localization project consists of three distinct parts.

### Content

This is the most obvious piece of the localization puzzle. Game content includes things like written text, spoken dialogue, and graphics. The localization work performed on the content is what will receive most of the audience's attention.

Game programmers everywhere

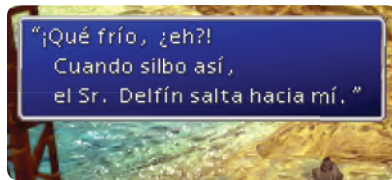


### Programming

A unique challenge to video game localization is the programming aspect. Every language is different, which means that video games often need to be reprogrammed to accommodate the target language's quirks.

For example, it's common for Japanese games to print text vertically, starting from the right side of the screen. To localize such a game into English, the game would need to be reprogrammed to make the text print horizontally, starting from the left side of the screen.

Spanish punctuation is "cool"



Or say you're localizing a game from English into Spanish. If the game's font doesn't already include accented characters, like é or í, you'd need to modify the game's programming to add support for them.

Most players won't notice the programming work put into a game's localization, but even the slightest efforts can greatly benefit the end experience.

Today, digital manuals and in-game tutorials mean more work than ever for localizers



### Supplemental Materials

A game's localization involves more than just the game itself. As a localizer, you often need to translate things like internal design documents, developer logs, and voice acting notes. And don't forget about the game's box and manual. Even things like websites and marketing materials can fall under the game localization umbrella. These things really add up!

These three aspects intertwine to create a full game localization. If the quality of one aspect is lacking, it'll drag the others down a bit too. On the other hand, improving the quality of one aspect will improve the others and result in a superior final product.

Throughout this book we'll be looking at how *EarthBound's* localization team handled these three key aspects.

### Localization Mishaps in Action

If a game localization is done well, most players will never notice the amount of work put into each piece of the project. Conversely, if a piece of a localization is done poorly, it will easily pull players out of the experience.

#### Content Mishaps



*Battle Rangers* (Arcade)



*Magician Lord* (Neo Geo)

#### Programming Mishaps

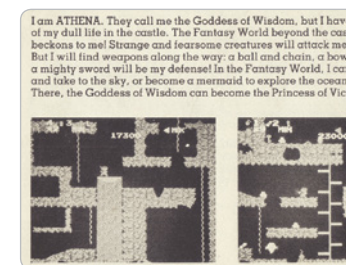


*Lufia II: Rise of the Sinistrals* (SNES)



*Suikoden II* (PlayStation)

#### Supplemental Mishaps



*Athena* (NES) manual with game screens from a completely different game, *Spelunker* (NES)



*Resident Evil Revelations* (3DS) box art, featuring the spelling error "REVELAITONS" on the spine

## The Man Behind the Games

*EarthBound* is known for its unconventional ideas and creative gameplay mechanics, yet the game wasn't designed by a normal game designer at all!

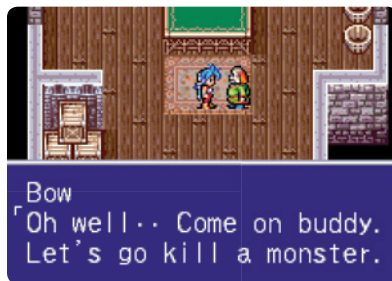
The *MOTHER* series was created by Shigesato Itoi. Itoi has participated in so many different professions throughout his career that it's hard to even begin to describe him. He's primarily known for his famous copywriting work – his catchy slogans and inventive marketing phrases rocketed him to the top of the industry during Japan's "copywriting boom" in the 1980s.

Itoi's creative success led to a wealth of other opportunities, including:

- ◆ Composing lyrics for hit musicians
- ◆ Writing articles for culture magazines
- ◆ Hosting educational television shows for children
- ◆ Acting in films with popular celebrities
- ◆ Holding annual fishing tournaments with popular comedians
- ◆ Co-hosting radio programs
- ◆ Searching for legendary lost gold on national television
- ◆ Voice-acting characters in popular animated films
- ◆ Starring in famous commercials
- ◆ Writing and compiling short stories
- ◆ Localizing American children's books into Japanese

This is just the tip of the iceberg and doesn't even cover all of the awards he's won in different industries. Basically, Shigesato Itoi has the knack for seeing things in interesting new ways, so it's no wonder that his game-related side projects were filled with unique inventiveness too.

*EarthBound* was unique in a time when "Let's Kill Things" was the unofficial motto of most other games



and item descriptions. This is in sharp contrast with other games' text from that time, and is why *EarthBound's* localizers went to great lengths to preserve the game's original voice.

Itoi's unusual sense of humor and his Japanese view of American culture helped *EarthBound* stand out from its contemporaries. The game's text isn't filled with puns – it's brimming with humanity. Every line of text has life and character of its own, from key moments in the game down to the lowliest NPCs



◀ Shigesato Itoi during the height of the copywriting boom in Japan



▶ 12,000 women across Japan entered a contest to star with Itoi in a series of famous television commercials for Pocari Sweat



▲ Itoi's reputation as a copywriter led to him becoming a cult celebrity of sorts



◀ Itoi has starred in over a dozen TV shows and made guest appearances on many more

## MOTHER 2's Marketing and Reception



▲ Satoru Iwata once stated that *MOTHER 2*'s slogan was his inspiration to "expand [Nintendo's] gaming population" as the company's president

▶ The theme of trying to reach a wider audience really grabbed the industry's attention!

Although they were essentially the same game at their core, *MOTHER 2* and *EarthBound* were marketed very differently. Because *MOTHER 2* was the sequel to an already-popular game, Nintendo had high expectations for its release. So some serious work – and money – was invested in the game's marketing.

### Slogan

In the 1970s and 1980s, video games were new, exciting, and enjoyed by everyone of all ages in Japan. But that initial "video game boom" had faded by the mid-1990s – even Shigesato Itoi's sister had long given up gaming. His hopes to create a game that appealed to everyone again can be found in the slogan he personally created for *MOTHER 2*: "Grownups, kids, and even your sister."



### Previews

*MOTHER 2*'s development lasted for years, which meant it was covered in Japanese gaming magazines for years. Developer interviews, early impressions, and inside scoop articles were featured regularly. There were even video tapes that included special previews of *MOTHER 2*, complete with developer commentary.

### Advertisements

Japanese game magazines also featured full-page advertisements for *MOTHER 2* for months. In fact, there were even full-page advertisements for *MOTHER 2* strategy guides! Most noteworthy of all, though, was the series of television ads for *MOTHER 2*. These short commercials featured a young boy and a teenager at a café talking about the game. The teenager was played by a young Takuya Kimura, a famous heartthrob at the time who is now arguably the biggest celebrity in all of Japan. Between Kimura's star power and the commercials' humor, *MOTHER 2*'s ad campaign remains memorable to this day.



▲ Itoi says he personally requested Kimura for these ads, knowing he'd be a huge star someday



## Reviews

*MOTHER 2* was a critical success and received a very positive 34/40 score from *Famitsu*. Reviewers praised it for its graphics, music, writing, and atmosphere. Most of all, it was praised for being unique amid a deluge of lackluster RPGs.

“ *MOTHER 2* is remarkable in the way its clever dialogue and direction draw the player into the game's world.” - Georgio Nakaji, *Weekly Famicom News*

“ The writing is especially well-done and will move many players to tears. This game will very likely go down in history, so we recommend playing it at least once.” - *Marukatsu Super Famicom*

## Merchandise

A great deal of *MOTHER 2* merchandise was available after the game's release. There were the many strategy guides, of course, but it went far beyond that. Japanese fans could buy the official *MOTHER 2* soundtrack CD, *MOTHER 2* manga, an official *MOTHER 2* novel, a *MOTHER 2* choose-your-adventure book, and a book of *MOTHER 2* sheet music. There was even a card game based on *MOTHER 2*'s Slot Brother characters!



◀ I don't know how he did it, but even the text in this simple card game is full of Itoi's unusual creativity!



# Onett Odyssey

Meteor Crashes, Local Boy Investigates

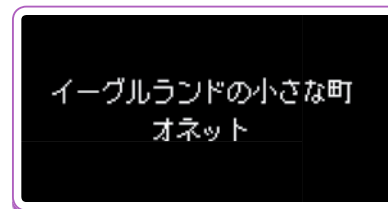
## The World of EarthBound

The game's world looks a lot like the real world. Does this mean Onett is near Seattle? And what's in South America?



*EarthBound* begins in the city of Onett in the fictional country of Eagleland. No other countries are named in the game, but there *are* two others: Foggyland and Chommo. These extra details are right at the front of *MOTHER 2*'s manual, but were left out of *EarthBound*'s guide.

Itoi has said that a fifth town in this series would've been called "Fivalen"



A number of towns in the game share a super simple naming scheme: Onett, Twoson, Threek, and Fourside. Despite this logical number theme, the Japanese spelling makes it 100% clear that "Onett" wasn't meant to be pronounced like the number "one". Instead, Itoi intended the name to sound like "oh-net" or "ah-net".



Intended pronunciations are much clearer in Japanese than in English, so we'll be taking a look at even more puzzling *EarthBound* names as we come across them!

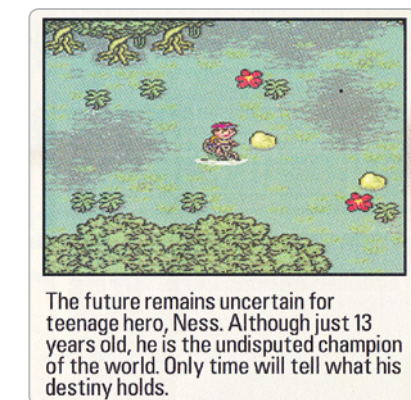
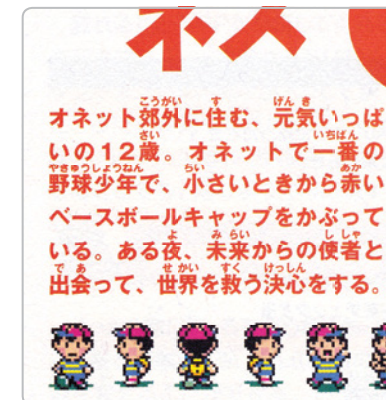
## Our Hero

*EarthBound*'s main character is a boy from Eagleland named Ness. Although he looks the same whether you're playing *MOTHER 2* or *EarthBound*, his official artwork in manuals and elsewhere was changed drastically!



Just think, somebody at a board meeting must've said, "And turn his cap backwards, that'll make him hip with all the kiddos"

Besides giving Ness a slightly older look, *EarthBound*'s localizers made him slightly older – maybe. One unofficial Japanese guide claims that Ness is 12, but the official *EarthBound* guide states that he's 13.



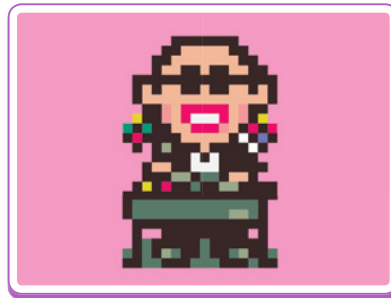
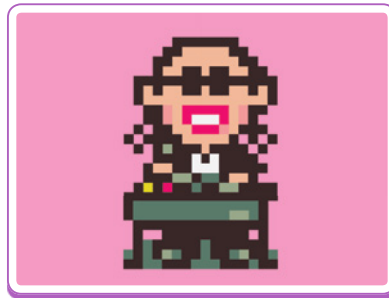
Swamp bicycling, the dream sport of 13-year-olds everywhere

To get official confirmation on the matter, I asked Shigesato Itoi about Ness' age. He answered with:

“ I don't think he had an 'official age', actually. Plus the game's development took so long that he might've aged over time anyway. However, my own daughter was in fourth or fifth grade at the time, which held a very strong spot in my mind. She would put on a backpack [just like Ness'] and head off to all sorts of places, you know?”

So it sounds like Ness' age was left vague for Japanese players, but was made clear for English-speaking players.

Incidentally, the official Japanese guide gives this guy a name: "Keyboar"



The change to the Runaway Five name has left *EarthBound* fans with a common question: why are they called that when there are six musicians? It's because the keyboard player isn't part of the band. Even so, this character underwent a slight visual redesign of his own.

The band's costume changes were implemented outside the game as well. The lead singers' official artwork, which was printed in guides and magazines, was recolored to match their new in-game suits. Someone at Nintendo was clearly very concerned about these Blues Brothers references.



"It's a hundred and six miles to Fourside, we've got a full tank of gas, half a Pak of Bubble Gum, it's dark, and we're wearing sunglasses." "Hit it."

#### Battle of the Suits: NOA vs. The Runaway Five

Nintendo of America and *EarthBound*'s localizers went to great lengths to distance the Runaway Five from the Blues Brothers, even resorting to elaborate costume changes. Despite these efforts, though, the band's original black suits regularly appeared in other Nintendo products!



Super Smash Bros. (Nintendo 64)



Super Smash Bros. Melee (GameCube)



Nintendo Power (Issue #70)



EarthBound Player's Guide

#### The Mystery of the Musicians' Names

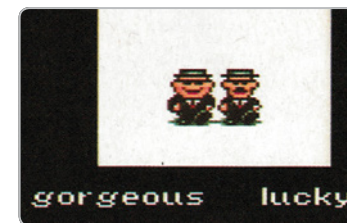
Most of the Runaway Five's members go unnamed in the game, but they do have names according to several official Japanese sources: Lucky, Nice, Gorgeous, Okay, and Groovy. Unfortunately, the assigned names are a bit inconsistent depending on what you check. The band leaders in particular have had some issues over the years.



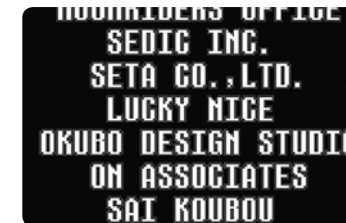
The game's text specifically mentions that Lucky is one of the two band leaders



The official *MOTHER 2* guide lists the chubby singer as Nice and the tall singer as Lucky



A *Famitsu* interview with Shigesato Itoi suggests that Gorgeous is the chubby singer instead



Maybe it's just a coincidence, but for some reason the name "Lucky Nice" is listed in the game's credits



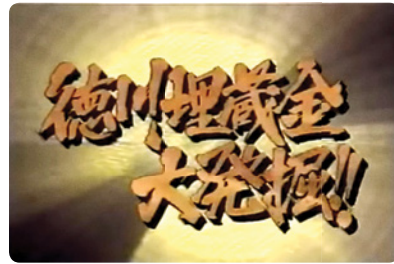
Given all this information, fans wondered for years which was the correct name for the chubby guy. And when official figurines were released in 2010, it seemed the definitive answer would finally come. Instead, the chubby singer was called Lucky and the tall one was called Nice. What a mess!



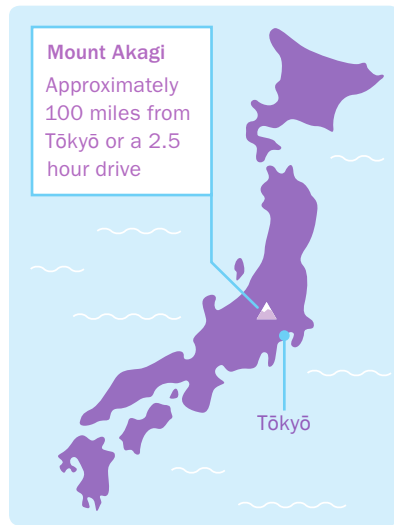
### Shigesato Itoi's Gold Mining Adventure

Shigesato Itoi became especially well known in the early 1990s when he searched for legendary buried gold on national TV.

There were actually multiple digs and multiple TV specials – this one was titled *The Great Tokugawa Buried Gold Excavation!!*



According to Japanese legend, a large amount of gold was stolen from the capital and hidden just before the ruling government fell to opposition forces in 1868. Although it's difficult to calculate what it would be worth now, conservative estimates suggest it was at least the equivalent of 100 million U.S. dollars today. Treasure hunters, relying on clues and historical artifacts, have tried to locate the gold for the past 150 years.



Based on new information, Itoi became convinced that the gold was buried at Mt. Akagi in central Japan. There, he famously declared, "It exists. I just know it." Together with a team of construction experts, historians, and even psychics, he dug deep holes into the mountainside with heavy machinery. Although many tunnels and items from the mid-1800s were discovered, no gold was ever found.

Despite the setback, Itoi remained convinced. Eventually, though, he publicly admitted defeat and humorously stated that he had produced "the one and only civil engineering show in the world". The entire event was notable enough that several Japanese books were written about it, and Itoi himself included a similar gold mine adventure in *MOTHER 2*. The hunt for the hidden gold continues to this day – in fact, one family has been searching for it for three generations!

The mine sequence in the game mirrors Itoi's own mining adventure – both gold mines end up having no gold at all



Mt. Akagi, the symbol of Gunma prefecture, is considered an object of worship and natural beauty



The dig site was faithfully recreated in the game



Itoi's team dug deep into the mountainside, at a spot called the "Well of Genjirō"



Itoi used the television coverage to cleverly promote *MOTHER 2*. Sadly, he says he threw away this historic jacket long ago



The treasure, if real, is very likely in the form of old Japanese gold coins known as *koban*



Itoi finally admitted defeat on national television after nothing of significant worth was found

"Hello, my name is  
JetBlue Hilton."

### Ownership Rights



The owner of Summers' hotel greets Ness and friends personally. In *MOTHER 2*, he's known as "Reso'cha Richmond". The name "Reso'cha" comes from the English phrase "resort charter", and refers to a famous Japanese airline campaign that began in 1994. "Richmond" is a reference to Richmond Hotels, a large Japanese hotel chain known for its high-quality, modern service, and international atmosphere.

*EarthBound*'s localizers were unaware of these cultural references, though, so the man's name remained essentially unchanged as "Risosha Richmond".

#### Japan Airlines' Memorable Reso'cha Campaign

Japan Airlines' famous Reso'cha marketing campaign was designed to attract tourists to popular vacation spots such as Hawaii and Guam. The campaign's colorful art and distinctive mascots are synonymous with 1990s Japan.



As of 2016, there are 40 Richmond hotels like this across Japan

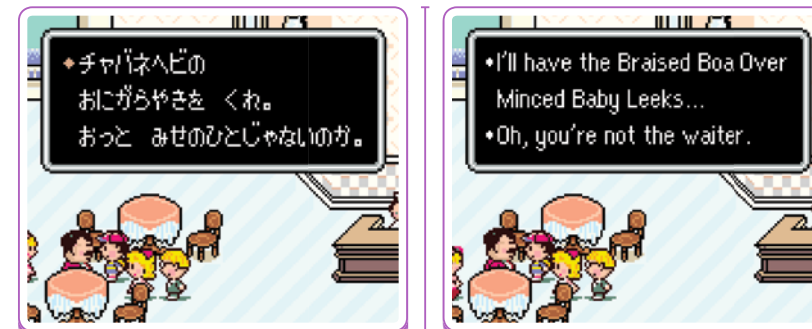
### Exotic English



In *MOTHER 2*, a woman in the Summers hotel uses the English phrase "excuse me" with Japanese pronunciation. This simple sentence might not seem like much, but speaking a foreign language like this lends her and the hotel a sophisticated, international ambiance. *EarthBound*'s localizers left the line as-is, so when she says "excuse me", it just seems like a random line of no significance.

◀ A better option might've been to write "excuse me" in another language, but I feel like "Excusez-moi" might be too synonymous with sarcasm

### Culinary Curiosities



An inattentive man in Summers' fancy restaurant mistakes Ness for a waiter. In *MOTHER 2*, he asks for a ridiculous dish: brown-winged snake cooked "onigara-yaki" style. *Onigara-yaki* is a Japanese cooking method that involves splitting shellfish down the middle and grilling it whole. Obviously, snakes don't have wings and they certainly aren't shellfish, so the whole dish is a bunch of silly nonsense.

*EarthBound*'s localizers went with a much more realistic-sounding dish: braised boa over minced baby leeks.



◀ I'm so bad with cooking terms in any language that I never fully understood the name of this Japanese dish until now

◀ *Onigara-yaki* literally translates as "devil shell grill". Sounds like a special move in a fighting game



### Shamblers

スーダララッタに  
あってしまった!

•You encounter the  
Wild 'n Wooly Shambler.



▲ The legendary *Sūdara-Bushi* was originally created to fill the B-side of an album

Some very otherworldly creatures try to stop Ness' party near the end of the game. In *MOTHER 2*, these enemies are known as “Sui-Sui” and “Sūdararatta”. These names have no meaning of their own – instead, they're nonsense lyrics from a famous Japanese song titled *Sūdara-Bushi*. The song features a fun, catchy tune and lyrics about a man's pitfalls in life. The first two stanzas of the song translate into English as follows:

I went drinking with the plan to  
only have one little drink  
At some point I wound up  
bar-hopping  
And before I realized it, I was  
sleeping sideways on a train  
station bench  
There's no way this is good for  
my health  
I understand that, but I just  
can't stop



a hore sui-sui sūdararatta  
sura-sura sui-sui-sui  
suīra sūdararatta  
sura-sura sui-sui-sui  
sui-sui sūdararatta  
sura-sura sui-sui-sui  
sui-sui sūdararatta  
sūdararatta sui-sui



The nonsensical lyrics of the second stanza are usually accompanied by some lighthearted dancing. Why Shigesato Itoi pulled these enemy names from this song may forever be a mystery.

*EarthBound*'s localizers weren't sure how to handle these bizarre Japanese names, so they gave the creatures all-new names based on their appearance. Thus, they're known as the “Wooly Shambler” and “Wild 'n Wooly Shambler” in English.



◀ *Sūdara-Bushi* was such a big hit when it debuted in 1961 that a movie based on the song was released in 1962

### Tengu

てんぐどのに  
あってしまった!

•You encounter the Tanguo.



Some truly bizarre enemies hang out in the Pink Cloud cave, including one creature that plays a flute. In *MOTHER 2*, this being is known as “Tengu-dono”, which translates into something like “Sir Tengu”. Tengu are legendary creatures from Japanese folklore, famous for their long noses and devious behavior. They're notorious enough that they're somewhat known in North America too, so *EarthBound*'s localizers opted to call this creature a “Tanguo”.

▶ A tengu wears its distinctive costume as it harasses a Buddhist monk



### Petunia

おにらフレンチアに  
おそわれた!

•You engage the Demonic Petunia.



A giant plant enemy lurks in the Deep Darkness. In *MOTHER 2*, it's known as the “Devil Rafflesia”. A rafflesia is a large, parasitic flowering plant found in Southeast Asia. They attract insects with their scent, which is often compared to the odor of rotting corpses.



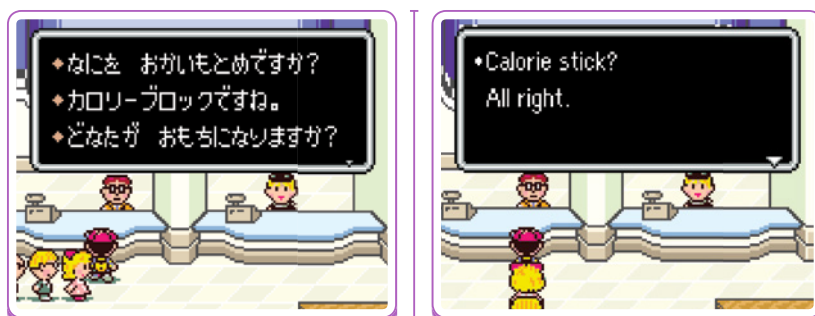
◀ The rafflesia reference is further evidence that the Deep Darkness is in Southeast Asia, but this connection is lost with the petunia change

*EarthBound*'s localizers changed the enemy's name to something that North American audiences would be more familiar with. The terrifying plant monster is now known as the “Demonic Petunia” in English, although it's unclear why this religious reference was left intact when so many others were removed from *EarthBound*.

## Food

### Calorie Stick

I feel “Energy Bar” would’ve been a better choice, but it’s easy to say that long after the project is over



A handy food item found during the middle section of the game is packed with calories. In *MOTHER 2*, it’s known as the “Calorie Block”, a generic Japanese term for nutritional, cookie-like energy bars. The term “calorie block” isn’t really used in North America, so *EarthBound*’s localizers changed it to “Calorie Stick”, which describes the item’s appearance a little bit better.

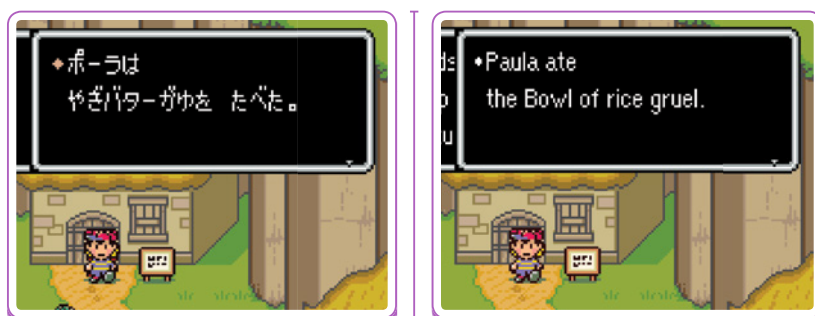
The most famous “calorie block” of all is Calorie Mate, which has even appeared in other video games



On top of this, the *MOTHER 2* guide illustrations of the Calorie Blocks make them look rather long and bar or stick-like

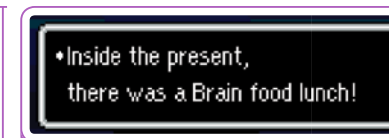
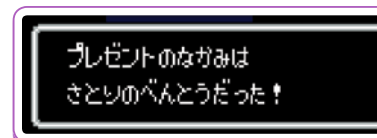
### Rice Gruel

The Japanese word for gruel is “*kayu*”, which sounds so much nicer, more edible, and less frightening



The party’s food options grow more diverse as the game progresses. One exotic food item in *MOTHER 2* is known as “Goat Butter Porridge”. This Dalaamese dish was renamed in *EarthBound* to the less enticing “Bowl of Rice Gruel”. The downgrade happened because the name needed to be made definitively singular – similar to how “Lifenoodles” was changed to “Cup of Lifenoodles” and “Orange Juice” was changed to “Can of Orange Juice”. Prefixing this name with “Bowl of” didn’t leave enough room for the full, original name, so the localizers had to make a compromise.

### Brain Food Lunch



As a kid, I always imagined that this meal actually contained brains

One of the best healing items in the game recovers a lot of HP and PP all at once. In *MOTHER 2*, this incredible item is known as the “Bentō of Enlightenment” or “Box Lunch of Enlightenment”. The long name and the audiences’ unfamiliarity with Japanese box lunches compelled the localizers to give the item a new name. It was initially called the “Smart Food Lunch”, but was changed to “Brain Food Lunch” by the time the game was released.

Bottle of water	Bottle of water
Jar of delisauce	Bowl of rice gruel
Bottle of water	Smart food lunch
Brain stone	Cup of Lifenoodles
Bracer of kings	Cup of Lifenoodles
Pharaoh’s curse	Eraser eraser



This is a Japanese *bentō* – you can see why it’s often translated as “box lunch”

### Peanut Cheese Bar



I’m not sure why, but I always pictured Peanut Cheese Bars as looking like Butterfinger candy bars

An unusual treat can be purchased exclusively in Saturn Valley. In *MOTHER 2*, this snack is known as an “Almond Monaka”. A *monaka* is a Japanese sweet that consists of *azuki* red bean jam or chestnut filling placed inside two crisp, rice wafers. The *monaka* items in *MOTHER 2* contain an almond-based filling, which is rare, but not unheard of.

Because *monaka* isn’t well-known outside of Japan, *EarthBound*’s localizers gave this Mr. Saturn snack a new name, as well as a new ingredient combination that North American audiences could appreciate. The result was the “Peanut Cheese Bar”. The unusual name quickly became a fan favorite and inspired many fans to create Peanut Cheese Bar recipes of their own.



*Monaka* comes in all shapes and sizes. You can even find sushi *monaka* and *monaka* ice cream bars!

## Newspapers

In-game newspaper headlines change as events unfold in *MOTHER 2* and *EarthBound*. Many of these headlines are obscure and rarely seen, while others feature interesting localization choices.

### Mr. Leader Guy

Some of these lines are so obscure that I can't help but wonder if I was the first person to see them in years



A rare headline appears in Onett after Ness receives the Franklin Badge from Paula, but before he defeats Carpenter. In *MOTHER 2*, the headline reads:

- ◆ So-Called Cho-san running for Onett mayor

This little-known line is a reference to the short 1980s manga, *Iwayuru Hitotsu no Chōsan Shugi* ("So-Called One 'Chommunism'"). This comedy series features a main character named "Chō-san" and takes place in a fictional town populated with real-life celebrities from the time. Shigesato Itoi appears regularly in the series as the founder of a religious sect.

In addition to hundreds of Japanese celebrities, many international figures appeared in the series, including H.G. Wells, Ronald Reagan, Mikhail Gorbachev, Rock Hudson, and Princess Diana



*EarthBound*'s translators were likely unfamiliar with this pop culture reference. In some contexts, the word "chō" can mean "boss" or "leader" in Japanese, so it appears the headline was given a direct English translation:

- ◆ So called Mr. Leader Guy running for mayor of Onett

In short, the Japanese line ties *MOTHER 2*'s world with the world of an existing manga series, while the English line simply references a random, never-seen character.

## Where's the Sequel?



◀ Ack, they left the first quotation mark open! Everything since 1995 is part of a quote until someone closes it!

In *MOTHER 2*, Onett's newspaper gets a new headline after Giygas' defeat: "Onett police chief finally finishes MOTHER 2! Simply says, 'Where's 3?'" Naturally, the localizers changed this headline to fit the new circumstances: "Onett police chief finishes EarthBound, asks, 'Where is the sequel?'"

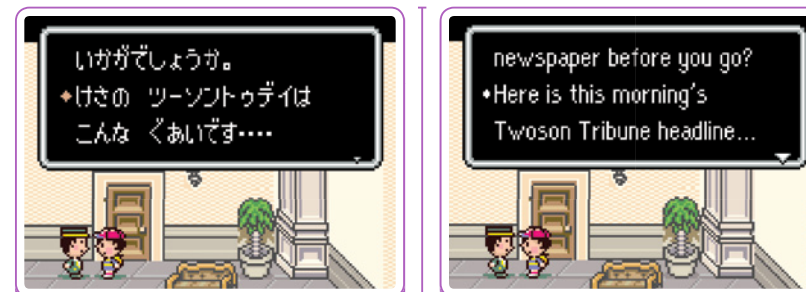
### Shigesato Itoi's Earliest Plans for MOTHER 3

*MOTHER 3* was actually in the design stages before *MOTHER 2* was released. At the time, Itoi said:

Ah, yeah, we're going to do one. It's decided. We've been thinking about it alongside this game. We've also decided what kind of game we're going to make. [...] I thought of it in the middle of the night - it was enough to make me rush and call my friend about it. Plus there's sort of a hint to it in *MOTHER 2*. I can't name any specifics because it's about the next game, but we're doing a CD game. For the Super Famicom.



## Twoson Newspaper

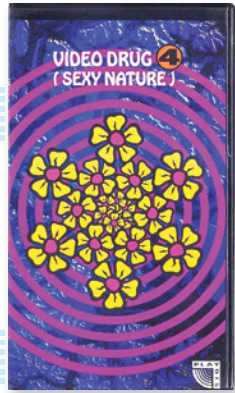


◀ I checked and neither *Tucson Tribune* nor *Tucson Today* are actual newspapers anymore

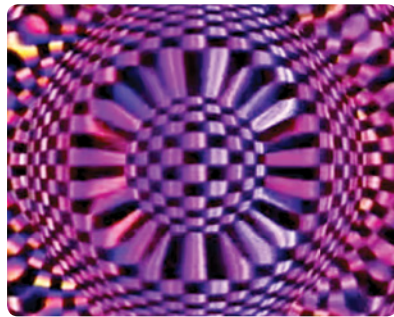
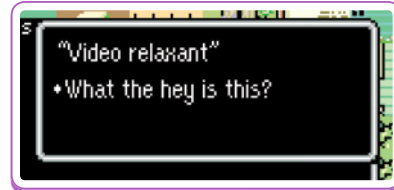
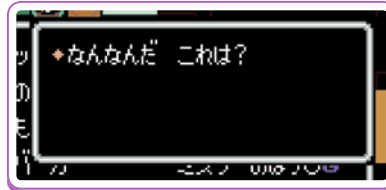
In *MOTHER 2*, Twoson's newspaper is known as the "Twoson Today". In *EarthBound*, it's called the "Twoson Tribune".

## Video Relaxant

Apparently the guy who designed the battle backgrounds spent two years creating them all!



The *Video Drug* series on VHS further popularized the term in early 1990s Japan



A well-known unused item in the game is called the “Video Drug” in *MOTHER 2* and the “Video Relaxant” in *EarthBound*. In Japanese, the term “video drug” refers to the ever-changing psychedelic patterns often seen in movies, screensavers, audio visualizers, and the like. Shigesato Itoi uses the term to refer specifically to the game’s battle

backgrounds, but it’s unclear why a “Video Drug” item exists. The prevailing theory is that it was originally an in-game tool for developers to check out the different battle background patterns.

## Onett

### Giant Step Hint

Back in 2009, some *MOTHER 2* development notes were sold on a Japanese auction site – I wish I could’ve bought ‘em!



A tiny development note snuck its way into an unused line in the final release of *MOTHER 2*:

Clear Giant Step You’re going to Giant Step, right? Then be careful not to annoy any police officers.

The “Clear Giant Step” part is in the Japanese command form and was likely part of a developer comment not meant to be included in the final game data. The text following the Japanese comment matches one of the hint man’s earliest hints.

## Bathroom Scene



This whole exchange reminds me of the Onett library bathroom, but this data appears to be more closely associated with outdoor Onett text

A series of lines involving a bathroom can be found in both *MOTHER 2* and *EarthBound*.

MOTHER 2 text (basic translation)	EarthBound text
Be quiet! Just hold your horses!	Be quiet!! Don't get so upset!
Is it just me, or do restrooms in bookstores and libraries always seem crowded for some reason?	Doesn't it seem like restrooms in bookstores and libraries are always crowded?
Just 10 more minutes. Be patient, will ya?!	'Scuse me! Just ten more minutes, please! Show some self control, will ya!
Just 10 more minutes. Be patient, will ya?!	'Scuse me! Just ten more minutes, please! Show some self control, will ya!
Sorry for the wait. Did you wet your pants? Ahahaha.	Sorry for keeping your waiting! Do you need a change of pants? Ah ha ha ha!



The text in the middle of this exchange repeats twice on purpose, possibly to trick players into leaving?

Based on the content and the location of this text data, these lines were most likely meant to appear somewhere in Onett. Several of the lines also include door-knocking sound effects and character movement scripts.