

= Muramasa : The Demon Blade =

Muramasa : The Demon Blade , known in Japan as Oboro Muramasa (Japanese : 隠刀乱舞 , lit . " Hazy Muramasa ") , is an action role @-@ playing game developed by Vanillaware for the Wii home console , and later the PlayStation Vita handheld console . The original game was published in 2009 by Marvelous Entertainment (Japan) , Ignition Entertainment (North America) , and Rising Star Games (Europe) . The Vita version was published in 2013 by Marvelous AQL in Japan and Aksys Games in Western territories . Using a 2D side @-@ scrolling perspective , the gameplay revolves around a beat em up fighting system , while incorporating RPG elements such as leveling and questing .

Muramasa takes place during the Edo period on Japan 's main island of Honshu . Due to ruling shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi 's thirst for power , conflicts have arisen over ownership of the Demon Blades , samurai swords that force their wielders to kill others before bringing tragedy and madness upon them . The story revolves around two different protagonists related to this conflict ? Momohime , a woman who is possessed by the spirit of vengeful r?nin Jinkuro Izuna ; and Kisuke , an amnesiac ninja on the run for a forgotten crime who is tied up with the tragedy that destroyed Momohime 's family . The Vita port includes four self @-@ contained stories based on Japanese folklore released under the banner title Genroku Legends (元禄伝説 , Genroku Kaikitan) .

The concept work for Muramasa began during the middle of development on Odin Sphere . Along with improving on the action gameplay over Odin Sphere , a great deal of effort was put into making the game 's setting authentic to the period . When the game released in the West , it retained its Japanese voicetrack to preserve its atmosphere . It released to moderate sales and mixed to positive reviews : the graphics were universally praised , the gameplay divided opinion and the story received a mixed response . The Vita port , released in the West as Muramasa Rebirth , released to strong sales and similar reception to its original version .

= = Gameplay = =

Muramasa is a two @-@ dimensional (2D) side @-@ scrolling action role @-@ playing game set on the main Japanese island of Honshu during the Edo period . Players take control of two characters with similar gameplay abilities . Navigation takes place through hand @-@ drawn 2D side @-@ scrolling environments reminiscent of Japanese artwork of the period , and can enter towns to talk with non @-@ playable characters (NPCs) and buy items such as health restoratives and accept quests . An additional cooking element allows the characters to cook meals using materials gathered during exploration : meals grant temporary character boosts , and fill a " fullness " meter that limits how much food a character can eat .

Combat comes in the form of both avoidable random encounters and scripted fights where the camera is fixed within the fighting area : enemies and bosses are primarily drawn from Japanese folklore and mythology . Battles are triggered only when enemies are near , with the player character otherwise keeping their weapons sheathed . In combat , characters attack and guard using a single @-@ button prompt , while another button accesses items such as healing potions . Continuously attacking triggers combos . Different moves include sword slashes combined with directional buttons , which have different effects such as throwing an enemy into the air with an upward slash . Additional offensive items such as smoke bombs are acquired during the course of the game . At the end of each battle , experience points are awarded to the player character depending on how fast the battle was finished : leveling up increases a character 's health , stats , and the amount of damage inflicted upon enemies .

Weapons are distinguished into two categories , Blade (katana) and Long Blade (n?dachi) : Blades are fast , while Long Blades are slower and deal higher damage . Three blades can be equipped at any one time : each blade has its own stats , determining the amount of damage that can be inflicted . When blocking or using a blade 's Secret Art special move , its Soul Power gauge depletes : if emptied , the sword breaks and its offensive abilities are drastically reduced . When sheathed , the Soul Power regenerates . Soul Power can be gathered in various locations to restore

Soul Power and the character 's health . There are 108 blades that can be collected and forged in @-@ game : forging blades requires Soul Power and " spirit " , and each blade has a level cap determining when it can be forged . Weapon forging is governed by a weapon @-@ based skill tree .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Muramasa takes place on Honshu , the main island of the Japanese archipelago , with its overall style and setting drawing heavily upon Japanese folklore and mythology . It is set in the Genroku period , itself within the larger Edo period , during the reign of the shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi . Tsunayoshi 's thirst for power has created conflict around ownership of the Demon Blades , samurai swords forged by the legendary swordsmith Muramasa Sengo that crave blood when drawn and bring madness and death to those foolish enough to draw them . Due to the chaos generated by this , the Demon Blades ' powers begin summoning demons from Yomi , along with causing ancient gods to stir from long slumber .

The two lead characters are Momohime (??) , a princess of the Narukami clan from the locality of Mino ; and Kisuke (??) , a runaway ninja with no memories but a burning desire for vengeance . For the course of the game , Momohime is inadvertently possessed by the spirit of Jinkuro Izuna (?? ???) , an unscrupulous r?nin who was trying to possess the body of Momohime 's betrothed Yukinojo Yagyu (?? ???) , a high @-@ status samurai . Momohime and Kisuke are each accompanied and watched over by a kitsune in human form . They are Kongiku (??) , who holds unacknowledged affection for Jinkuro , and Yuzuruha (???) , who aids Kisuke in his quest against the Demon Blades ' corruption . A key character in Kisuke 's storyline is Torahime (??) , Momohime 's sister .

= = = Plot = = =

Momohime 's Story

Momohime 's story begins after she wakes up Kyo with memories of being killed by the dying Jinkuro when he was aiming for her betrothed , the samurai lord Yukinojo . Upon encountering the spirit of Jinkuro , he forcefully possesses her , but before the process of soul transference is finished , they are attacked . In the confusion , Momohime 's soul is kidnapped by the vengeful monk Rankai and Jinkuro is forced to follow Kongiku as Momohime 's body will die if her soul is harmed . With her soul safe , Jinkuro sets out to regain the Dark Resurrection Demon Blade so he can properly utilize his Soul Transference Technique and gain influence through a new host . Encountering Yukinojo , who is searching for Momohime , the two battle . Momohime forces Jinkuro to spare Yukinojo , even when she learns that Yukinojo 's intentions in marrying her were part of a scheme to ruin her family as punishment for defying the shogun . Jinkuro goes to Yukinojo 's compound to retrieve the Dark Resurrection , but the storehouse where it is said to be is absorbed into Yomi by demons . Descending into Yomi , Jinkuro 's soul is briefly captured by a demon , and it is only with Momohime 's help that he escapes and learns that the Dark Resurrection was never in the storehouse . With Momohime 's body beginning to fail due to the strain Soul Transference put on it , Jinkuro attempts to ascent to Heaven so he can become an immortal demon , but is stopped by Raijin and Fujin .

While willing to accept his death and allow Momohime her remaining time in her body , Kongiku shows them another way to Heaven . There , Yukinojo appears and reveals that he had the Dark Resurrection all along . They are then attacked by Fudo @-@ Myoou , who is there to deliver divine justice upon Jinkuro . In the first ending , Jinkuro allows himself to be sent to Yomi while Momohime lives ; she decides to forgo her marriage to Yukinojo and become a Buddhist nun in the hope of saving Jinkuro 's soul through prayer . In the second ending , Momohime and Jinkuro are intercepted by Kisuke and Yuzuruha , resulting in Kongiku being robbed of her human form as

punishment for her defiance . Though defeated , Kisuke delivers a fatal wound to Momohime , forcing Jinkuro to merge his soul with Momohime 's to save her : this act leaves her an amnesiac but grants her Jinkuro 's sword fighting abilities , which become legendary as she travels Japan in search of her missing memories . In the third ending , after the battle with Fudo @-@ Myoou Jinkuro is transported to the night he first attacked Yukinojo and Momohime with the power of the Oboro Muramasa Demon Blade , which can defy the passage of fate . He chooses not to attack them , then later possesses Yukinojo 's body and uses that position to ensure Momohime 's safety and her family 's security . Momohime herself lives to be one hundred years old and bears three children , while Kongiku remains close to Jinkuro in the guise of a servant .

Kisuke 's Story

Kisuke 's story begins with him suffering amnesia and on the run from his former ninja comrades . Returning to Edo to discover the truth in the company of Yuzuruha , he accidentally breaks an ancient seal keeping damned souls at bay . Defeating the monsters they manifest as , he learns from his mollified ninja companions and their employer Yukinojo that he was part of a mission to steal the Kuzuryu Demon Blade from Momohime 's Nakurami Clan and punish them for defying the shogun 's order to surrender it , which in turn was tied in with Yukinojo 's intentions in marrying Momohime . Yukinojo sends Kisuke against Torahime , Momohime 's sister and the shrine maiden in charge of keeping the Kuzuryu 's power in check . Pursuing her , Kisuke fights both Torahime and undead soldiers loyal to her family . In pursuit of her , he faces agents who are preserving the flow of magic energy to Mount Fuji , including a young Yamabushi . His battles awaken his memories : he was originally disguised as a servant in Torahime 's household as part of Yukinojo 's scheme to destroy her family , but fell in love with Torahime and attempted to betray his ninja comrades when stealing the Kuzuryu . Dying from his wounds , the spirit of Senju Oboroya , the creator of the Oboro Style that controls the Demon Blades , fused with Kisuke to save his life and pass on the Oboro Style to someone who would use it for good . The fusion triggered Kisuke 's amnesia , but left him with the ability to wield Demon Blades without succumbing to their evil .

Rescuing Torahime from the spider demon Tsuchigumo , Kisuke learns that she died while fleeing from the shogun 's forces , and that her present life is a temporary gift from Amit?bha . The two travel to Mount Fuji , where its native dragon god has gone berserk with rage after Japan 's ley line energy is diverted to Edo , forcing a route into Heaven . The true culprit is the dark deity imprisoned in the Kuzuryu , the mad god Inugami . Upon being confronted , the possessed Shogun Tsunayoshi fatally wounds Torahime , who dies in Kisuke 's arms : Kisuke then defeats Tsunayoshi and takes possession of the Kuzuryu . In the first ending , after the battle , Kisuke asks Amit?bha to return the now @-@ enlightened Torahime to life , then commits suicide as an act of defiance when his demand is refused . Torahime asks for her and Kisuke to be reincarnated so she can help him attain enlightenment . In the second ending , Kisuke arrives to find Tsunayoshi killed by the Jinkuro @-@ possessed Momohime . Kisuke exorcises Jinkuro , and following Torahime 's final request becomes Momohime 's servant . The two then set out on a personal quest to locate all the Demon Blades causing conflict in Japan . In the third ending , after his battle , Kisuke is sent back in time to the day he first betrayed his employers through the Oboro Muramasa 's power . His warning allows Torahime to foil the plot against her family , then Kisiuke steals the Kuzuryu and sets off on a journey round the world to exhaust its power by striking down evil , promising to marry Torahime upon his return .

Genroku Legends

The Genroku Legends are split into four different stories directly inspired by Japanese folklore and set in the Muramasa universe . In " Fishy Tales of the Nekomata " , a domestic cat called Miike sees her family brought to ruin and all its members killed . Possessing the dying body of the family daughter Okoi and becoming a nekomata , she vows revenge against her family 's killers , assassins employed by their rival Netsuzo Wakamiya . Despite succeeding , her rage remains unseated and she extends her wrath to the entire household . In the end , her tails are cut off by Jinkuro when he is hired to exorcise her : before being robbed of her powers , she curses Jinkuro with illness , setting the events of Momohime 's story in motion . Now at peace , Miike spends time with an old priest and hosts moonlight dances with local cats . In the alternate ending , Miike becomes a ravenous demon

whose rage is finally quelled by the old priest .

In " A Cause to Daikon For " , a local farmer named Gonbe stirs up a revolt when the local Daimyo raises the taxes to the point that his village is on the brink of ruin . Aided by the spirit of his deceased wife Otae , Gonbe fights through the Daimyo 's minions before killing him . After the fight , it is revealed that he has been relating his story to Enma , the King of Hell and , due to his actions , is condemned to be tormented there . Due to her love for him , Otae willingly joins Gonbe despite being a pure soul . However , due to the punishment demons being overworked and Gonbe complaining to Enma , he is banished with his comrades and Otae back to the living world , where they get a chance to live in peace under a new and kinder Daimyo . In the alternate ending , the entire sequence is said to have been illusions holding Gonbe 's spirit captive around the ruins of the Daimyo 's castle . He , Otae and his comrades are freed by a traveling Yamabushi and ascend to heaven .

In " A Spirited Seven Nights ' Haunting " , the Iga ninja Arashimaru infiltrates the house of the Okabe clan , where Arashimaru steals the sacred Spear of Bishamon and kills the leader of the Okabe clan . After learning that he was actually the leader 's son , Arashimaru flees in disgust . Taking shelter in a shrine , Arashimaru accidentally breaks a mirror sacred to the Goddess Inaraki , who becomes a Shirohebi (white snake) that curses him to die in seven days . Heading to exact revenge on the Iga leader after besting his master Shiranui in combat , Arashimaru learns that his mission was orchestrated by So Xian , a Ming @-@ era Chinese spy working to destabilize Japan 's ruling classes who was indirectly responsible for the taking the young Kisuke from his family . Arashimaru kills So Xian and escapes his lair with Shiranui 's aid , then goes peacefully to his death after asking the saddened Shirohebi to give his head and Spear of Bishamon to his brother Dengoro so he can restore the Okabe house . Arashimaru 's head is given proper burial at the Shirohebi 's insistence , and Arashimaru 's spirit is deified due to the grave becoming a prayer site for pilgrims . In the alternate ending , Arashimaru is possessed by So Xian 's spirit , who enslaves Shirohebi and takes on the name " Orochimaru " . In a desperate act of defiance , Shirohebi has Shiranui spirit away the Okabe clan 's last surviving heir during Orochimaru 's attack who , when grown , takes on the name " Jiraiya " to fight Orochimaru .

In " Hell 's Where the Heart Is " , an Oni girl named Rajyaki is sent by her father Enma to seal the treasures of the Seven Gods of Fortune . On her journey , a womanizing ex @-@ monk called Seikichi accidentally proposes to her and she accepts him as her husband . In the end , Seikichi saves her after a grueling battle by feeding her the sacred peach of Fukurokuju . Due to this , she is banished from Yomi by her father . In one ending , the Seven Gods of Fortune persuade Rajyaki to return to her father , while Seikichi moves to live a proper life . In the end , Rajyaki returns in human form and formalizes their marriage , which continues after Seikichi dies and goes to Hell . In the alternate ending , Rajyaki and Seikichi run into each other again when she is being hunted by samurai . Seikichi saves her , pretending he killed her and using that to establish himself as a samurai . Rajyaki takes the guise of his human wife , and they have three daughters who bear their mother 's demonic horns . The Genroku Legends conclude with the narrator detailing the locations of the Seven Gods ' treasures scattered through the stories , and thanking the player for locating them and calming Enma so his demons could return to Hell .

= = Development = =

Muramasa was developed by Vanillaware , a studio created by former Atlus staff members to create successor projects to the 2D action @-@ adventure game Princess Crown . According to sound producer Hitoshi Sakimoto , the game 's director George Kamitani was laying out plans for Muramasa when Odin Sphere was in the middle of development . According to Kamitani , while Odin Sphere was an evolution of Princess Crown 's narrative , Muramasa provided the chance of evolving its gameplay . He even went so far as to dub it " Princess Crown III " . The draft proposal was completed by the end of 2006 . The positive sales of Odin Sphere gave Vanillaware the capital needed to begin full development on Muramasa . The team 's style of development was identical to their strategy for Odin Sphere , although they worked to change up some aspects to make it a

unique experience . When developing the game , the team decided to create a vertical plain for players to explore , something which the team had needed to forego with Odin Sphere . In addition , bathing sequences cut from Odin Sphere were reworked and incorporated into Muramasa as hot spring scenes .

The Wii was chosen as the game 's platform of release as its specs were fairly close to that of the PlayStation 2 , the console for which Odin Sphere was developed . This meant that the team could carry over their earlier experience rather than start from scratch learning about new hardware . Kamitani did create design proposals for versions on the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 , but went undeveloped development due to development costs . Using the Wii 's motion controls was tested by the team , but due to the game 's old @-@ fashioned style there was little need to implement them . The biggest problem when developing for the Wii was the graphics , especially how to get the various pieces of artwork in the game 's scenery to interact and respond properly . They also wanted to keep loading times down to a minimum , which was made possible due to the Wii 's area pre @-@ loading abilities . Technical tinkering of this kind went on until the end of development . The team was highly dedicated to the success of the project , putting a large amount of work to make it as good as it could be for players .

In creating the game 's atmosphere , which was based on Japan as it was in the Edo era combined with local folklore and mythology , the team wanted to create an air of realism within its fantasy world . In keeping with their wish for realism , Momohime and Kisuke were given distinct accents (Momohime used a cultured dialect while Kisuke spoke with an Edogawa accent) . Another realistic element was the game 's food , which was designed based on the types of delicacies that were popular in the 17th and 18th centuries . One of the folklore references was the 108 Demon Blades in the game , which was a direct reference to the 108 human vices in Japanese folklore . A number of monsters and deities from Japanese mythology made appearances in the game , and the art style was intended to give a " Japanese " feel without consciously copying artwork from the game 's period . The artwork was created at double its in @-@ game resolution , then reduced to fit within the hardware . Several potential playable characters and storylines , such as narratives following Jinkuro and Torahime , had to be cut from the game . Elements of the cut storylines were incorporated into Kisuke and Momohime 's stories . The game 's setting was a heavy departure from Vanillaware 's previous games , which had used Western @-@ inspired settings and stories . The game 's overall theme was " death " .

= = = Music = = =

The music was handled by a team from sound company Basiscape , composed of multiple composers who had worked on Odin Sphere . Sakimoto acted as sound producer , the sound director was Masaaki Kaneko , and the music was composed by Sakimoto , Yoshimi Kudo , Noriyuki Kamikura , Mitsuhiro Kaneda , Kimihiro Abe , Azusa Chiba and Masaharu Iwata . Sakimoto was working on music for Odin Sphere when the project was first proposed , and thought Kamitani was being overambitious working on a premise based in Japan when developing a game based on European mythology . During the initial planning stage , Sakimoto thought the game would be a " mock @-@ Japanese " project , with Japanese instruments inserted into techno music . Once he realized how sincere Kamitani was with the project , Sakimoto and the team needed to re @-@ identify with the roots of traditional Japanese music . For Sakimoto , his approach was to reconnect with how earlier Japanese people turned their wabi @-@ sabi philosophy and worldview into words and music : he carried over this approach into the project . Each of the composers had to go through similar experiences .

= = Release = =

Muramasa was first announced at the 2007 Tokyo Game Show (TGS) under the title Oboro Muramasa Y?t?den (?????? , lit . " The Hazy Legend of Muramasa 's Mystical Sword ") , alongside its intended platform , setting and gameplay mechanics . After its announcement , information

releases about the game virtually stopped , and an April 2008 report by Famitsu reported the game 's development was " struggling " , although no details were revealed . Muramasa was reintroduced at TGS 2008 under its current Japanese title , along with its planned release window in 2009 and details on its characters and story . The game released in Japan on April 9 , 2009 . It was later released as part of Nintendo Channel 's budget game line @-@ up in January 2010 , and re @-@ released on the Virtual Console for Wii U in July 2015 .

It was announced for a release in North America under the title Muramasa : The Demon Blade in October 2008 for a release the following year . The game was originally being published by Xseed Games , but in April 2009 they announced that they were dropping the title from their schedule . Publishing rights were transferred to Ignition Entertainment . Ignition Entertainment later explained that it was in hot competition with Xseed and Atlus to acquire the American publishing rights , and after seeing Muramasa at TGS 2008 they were encouraged to apply for the rights . The change between publishers was an internal agreement between Xseed , their parent company Marvelous USA , and Ignition . The situation was amicably resolved as Xseed already had a large number of Wii titles lined up , and giving Muramasa to another publisher allowed multiple titles not to be overlooked when it came to Western publicity . The game released in North America on September 8 , 2009 . The game 's localization was done by external localization companies in close collaboration with Ignition Entertainment . Due to the game 's strong Japanese atmosphere , it was seen as a hard sell in the West , but during localization a lot of work went into preserving it rather than adjusting it for Western tastes . Due to this , the game was not dubbed into English , but instead retained its Japanese voice track while text was localized . An aspect Ignition worked hard with was to make sure the localization was of good quality by working closely with their chosen localization partners . This was due to backlash received by fans and critics over the " lackluster " localization of Lux @-@ Pain , which had been beyond their control during development .

The game was published in Europe by Rising Star Games alongside other Marvelous products including Valhalla Knights : Eldar Saga and Arc Rise Fantasia . The English translation was carried over from the North American version , although the English language version underwent regional adjustment , and some minor faults were corrected . The game was also translated into French , Italian , German and Spanish , which made using the original translation more practical than creating a new one . Originally scheduled for November 2009 , it was first shifted into 2010 , then moved back into 2009 . The game released in Europe on November 6 of that year . Upon release in the United Kingdom , most retailers did not stock it : this was put down to a general attitude that it would not sell like prevalent franchises or games from mainstream genres . The game released in Australia on December 3 , 2009 .

= = = Muramasa Rebirth = = =

Muramasa Rebirth , released in Japan under its original title of Oboro Muramasa , is a port of Muramasa developed by Vanillaware for the PlayStation Vita . According to its development team , the Vita was chosen as the port 's platform over the more commercially successful Xbox 360 and PS3 due to the Vita 's OLED @-@ based screen , which they felt better portray the game 's palette . While content was cut from the original version , the team decided against going back and restoring it , instead creating new additional content . The controls were also adjusted to suit the new platform . Muramasa Rebirth was published in Japan by Marvelous AQL on March 28 , 2013 . The game 's Western release was handled by Aksys Games , which also created a new localization . Compared to the original version , which was described as a direct translation , Aksys Games ' version was more " flavorful " and more faithful to the original text . It released in North America on June 25 . It was released in Europe and Australia through PlayStation Network on October 16 .

In addition to the main game , four self @-@ contained stories were released as downloadable content (DLC) under the title Genroku Legends (????? , Genroku Kaikitan) , featuring new characters within the Muramasa universe . For the new characters , swords are replaced by other weapons such as clubs and shurikens , but they otherwise play in the same way as Momohime and Kisuke . New music was created for the title under Sakimoto 's supervision : the four episodes were

scored by Kudo , Chiba , Kaneda and Iwata respectively . The Vanillaware @-@ developed DLC launched in both Japan and the West between November 2013 and November 2014 : the final DLC 's Japanese release was delayed by over two months behind the Western release . A special edition of Muramasa Rebirth exclusive to Japan contained all four DLC episodes alongside the original content .

= = Reception = =

The Demon Blade received critical acclaim , garnering a score of 81 / 100 on Metacritic based on 58 critic reviews . In its review , Famitsu praised the art style , and called the battle system " absorbing " . Their main complaints were the lack of variety between characters and the story having no proper climax . Destructoid 's Conrad Zimmerman called it " a very solid title " , saying that while flawed in its story delivery and instances of repetition , its visuals were " absolutely beautiful " and it proved fun to play . IGN 's Mark Bozon was highly positive about the graphics and sound , but thought the backtracking might put some people off and said the story " may go over people 's heads " . Game Revolution writer Nick Tan enjoyed the game greatly , but admitted that its lack of depth reduced the score he could give it as a reviewer . Joe Juba , writing for Game Informer , found The Demon Blade " stunning " despite some missteps in its pacing and depth . GameSpot 's Tom McShea praised the visuals , boss battles and collectable swords , but found few other activities outside combat , which itself lacked depth . GamePro 's Andy Burt called the visuals " gorgeous " and praised the combat and multiple storylines , but found its linearity and occasions where combat got " bogged down " hampered the experience . GameTrailers praised its combat and visuals , calling it " one of the better action titles on the [Wii] " . Keza MacDonald , writing for Eurogamer , noted that " like many beautiful things , [Muramasa : The Demon Blade] is a little lacking in substance " , saying that its lack of depth undermined other aspects . Micheal Cunningham of RPGamer called it " a great game " to see and play despite its plain story . RPGFan 's Dennis Rubinshteyn shared several points in common with reviewers about the story and repetition , while again praising the graphics and sound design .

Rebirth also had a positive reception , with Metacritic giving it a score of 78 / 100 based on 26 critic reviews . In its review , Famitsu praised it for being a good remake , although one reviewer was disappointed at the lack of new content . Chris Carter of Destructoid said that people who had already played the original version would not find much new content , while newcomers would likely be enchanted by it . Juba , reviewing Rebirth for Game Informer , said that the game was " exactly what developer Vanillaware intended it to be : a better @-@ looking version of the 2009 release " , while noting that this had no fixed the game 's original faults as noted by him . IGN 's Colin Moriarty called Rebirth a " faithful port " , praising the improved localization and generally enjoying playing despite backtracking hampering the experience . Adrian den Ouden of RPGamer also praised the localization and shared points of praise and criticism with the previous reviewer . Stephen Meyerink of RPGFan , who had not played the Wii original , called Rebirth " a gorgeous , action @-@ packed , fairly lengthy adventure that looks , sounds , and plays better than ever " . Chris Holzworth of Electronic Gaming Monthly was impressed by the visuals and indifferent about the story , and recommended playing it on a higher difficulty setting .

= = = Sales = = =

On its debut in Japan , The Demon Blade reached # 2 in game sales charts , coming in behind Sengoku Basara : Battle Heroes with 29 @,@ 000 units sold . Sales of the title were higher than anticipated , resulting in several stores in Japan being sold out within two weeks of its release . The game had sold 47 @,@ 000 units by November 2009 . In North America , NPD Group reported that the game had sold 35 @,@ 000 units during its first month of release . In a feature on notable video games in 2009 , GamesTM stated that The Demon Blade sold " extremely well " , besting established Western franchise releases such as Dead Space : Extraction . Ignition Entertainment , the game 's North American publisher , confirmed that the September sales for The Demon Blade

had fallen within the NPD Group 's estimates , and had met their sales expectations . In a 2010 interview , publisher Marvelous Entertainment stated that , despite positive reception from both critics and players , Muramasa : The Demon Blade had suffered from low sales in Japan , North America and Europe . This was put down to it being a non @-@ traditional game and the falling relevance of the Wii hardware .

In its first week of release , Rebirth debuted at # 5 , selling 45 @,@ 660 physical units . Within the first month following its release in Japan , the game topped 100 @,@ 000 shipments , with at least 67 @,@ 800 physical retail sales , and the remainder as digital copies distributed on the PlayStation Network . Muramasa Rebirth ranked as the seventh most downloaded digital Vita game on the Japanese PlayStation Network in 2013 . In both North America and Europe , the game ranked high on PSN download charts : it ranked as the fifth best @-@ selling Vita title in North America , while in Europe it debuted at # 5 before climbing to # 4 by December 2013 .