

= Revelations : Persona =

Revelations : Persona , released in Japan as Megami Ibunroku Persona (Japanese : ?????????? , lit . " Goddess ' Odyssey : Persona ") , is a role @-@ playing video game developed and published by Atlus . It is the first entry in the Persona series , itself a subseries of the Megami Tensei franchise , and the first role @-@ playing entry in the series to be released in the west . Originally released for the PlayStation in 1996 in Japan and North America , the title was ported to Microsoft Windows in 1999 . A port to the PlayStation Portable retitled Shin Megami Tensei : Persona was released in 2009 in North America and Japan , and 2010 in Europe . This port featured new cutscenes and a redone localization .

The story focuses on a group of high school students as they are confronted by a series of supernatural incidents . After playing a fortune @-@ telling game , the group each gain the ability to summon Personas , the multiple selves within them . Using this power under the guidance of Philemon , a benevolent being representing humanity 's subconscious , the group face off against multiple forces that threaten the world . Gameplay revolves around the characters navigating environments around their town and fighting enemies using their Personas . During the course of the game , the player can create new Personae for battle using spell cards gained in battle or by talking with enemies .

Persona began development after the release of Shin Megami Tensei If ... , with the idea of creating a subseries around the positively received high school setting of If Multiple staff members from previous Megami Tensei titles were involved in development , including character designer Kazuma Kaneko , and director Kouji Okada . Multiple aspects of the story , including the Persona and the character Philemon , were taken from Jungian psychology , while Kaneko 's character designs were based on both staff members , and celebrities and fictional characters of the time . Reception to the game has generally been positive , with most praising its approach to the genre , while its navigation and localization were criticized . Its PSP port shared most points of praise with the original , along with the improved localization , but also drew negative comments for its by @-@ then dated mechanics and graphics .

= = Gameplay = =

Revelations : Persona is a role @-@ playing video game in which the player takes control of a group of high school students . A mixture of navigation styles are used : navigation round the students ' hometown is done using an overhead view , navigation of standard environments such as outside areas and story locations use an angled third @-@ person view , and dungeons and most buildings are navigating in first @-@ person . An icon in the top right @-@ hand corner of the screen displays a lunar phase : this display shows the passage of in @-@ game time , and its status determines the activity patterns and moods of enemy demons . Battles are both triggered by story events and through random encounters around the world map and dungeon environments . If the player attacks an enemy from behind , the party is given a set of attacks costing no magic points or health points .

Battles take place on a grid @-@ based battle arena , with characters and enemies moving according to their position on the grid . Four commands are available to the party : Attack (fight enemies) , Contact (talk with an enemy) , Analyze (check an enemy for its strength and weaknesses) , and Form (rearrange the party on the grid) . The character 's main means of attack is their Persona , beings summoned into battle to cast a spell that can heal the party , and inflict physical or elemental damage on an enemy . Each Persona has access to up to eight skills , and each character can change their Persona during their turn . Personas earn experience points independent of the characters they are assigned to , and gain new abilities through extended use . Experience is awarded based on how often the player uses certain characters or Personas . Alongside their Personas , each character is able to attack with an equipped melee weapon or firearm , use an item , or attempt to talk with the demons that act as the game 's standard enemies .

Talking to a demon has different effects based on its personality , responding in a specific way to

certain actions . There are four emotional responses that the player can elicit from a demon : anger , fear , joy , and interest . Triggering one of these emotions three times will cause the demon to perform an action : an angry demon will attack the party , a frightened demon will flee the battle , a joyful demon will give the player an item , and an interested demon will either leave the battle , give the player an item , or give the player a special spell card (tarot cards aligned with a particular Persona family or Arcanum) . Functions related to the customization of Personas are performed in a special place called the Velvet Room : there , the character Igor can summon new Personas from among the various enemies defeated for a fee . He can also use two spell cards along with a special item to create a new Persona , which can inherit skills from the Personas used in the fusion . A Persona can only be fused using cards from certain Persona families . Personas can also be deleted if the player so chooses .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

The game takes place in Japan in 1996 , in the town of Mikage @-@ cho . All the main characters attend St. Hermelin High , the town 's high school , being in Class 4 taught by Saeko Takami . The other main feature of the town is the local branch of SEBEC (Saeki Electronics & Biological & Energy Corporation) . All the main characters have the power to summon Personas , described in the manual as " the power of their hidden selves " . The power to call Personas is granted by Philemon , a being born from the Collective Unconscious who acts as the party 's spiritual guide and helper . He appears both in a human form and as a butterfly .

The player controls a silent protagonist , a second @-@ year student who acts as their in @-@ game representation . The rest of the cast are Maki Sonomura , whose near @-@ constant ill health has made her inwardly bitter ; Kei Nanj? , a self @-@ confident heir to an important family business ; Yukino Mayuzumi , a former gang member reformed through the efforts of Saeko ; Hidehiko Uesugi , a man who puts on a facade of strength to cover his weaknesses ; Yuka Ayase , a girl who consciously acts like a stereotypical " high school girl " ; Masao Inaba , a spoiled and rebellious youth ; and Eriko Kirishima , a woman with half @-@ American parentage with an interest in the occult . The main antagonist is Takahisa Kandori , who runs the local SEBEC facility . During the SEBEC route , the player has the option of recruiting Reiji Kido , a student with a vendetta against Kandori .

= = = Plot = = =

The game starts with the protagonist , along with schoolmates Hidehiko , Yuka and Masao , playing a fortune @-@ telling parlor game called " Persona " while Kei and Yukino watch . After playing the game , the group see a ghostly figure , and the protagonist , Masao , Kei and Yukino are rendered unconscious . The protagonist is then drawn into the realm of Philemon , who grants him the power of Persona and warns him that his new power will soon be needed . After the four recover and at the suggestion of their teacher Saeko , they go to have a check @-@ up and visit classmate Maki at the hospital . While visiting , Maki is taken ill , and while they are waiting for news , the ICU where Maki is being treated vanishes and the town is attacked by demons , the summoned manifestations of people 's inner darkness . Using their Personae , the four defend themselves , and after meeting up with Eriko , they head to the town 's Ayama Shrine to find Maki 's mother Setsuko . Upon arrival , they find Setsuko wounded after an attack by Kandori . Setsuko reveals him to be the culprit behind the changes to the town , caused by a reality @-@ altering machine called the Deva System . Nanjo and Masao head out to confront SEBEC , while the protagonist , Eriko and Yukino bring Setsuko back to the school . After this point , the game splits into two story routes : the main SEBEC route , and the alternate Snow Queen route .

In the SEBEC route , should the protagonist decide to confront SEBEC , he is first joined by an

apparently @-@ recovered Maki , then asked by Nanjo to help save Masao , who is captured by demons . The protagonist , Maki and Nanjo rescue Masao , but on the way Maki displays an odd lack of certain memories including being hospitalized . After rescuing Masao and infiltrating SEBEC , the group confront Kandori . After cornering him inside the Deva System , a girl in black called Aki appears and knocks the party unconscious . When they awake , they find themselves in a duplicate , idealized version of their world . The group eventually find and corner Kandori , whose ultimate goal was to become a deity and find meaning in life . After an initial fight , Kandori is possessed by his Persona Nyarlathotep , then finally defeated . Before dying , Kandori reveals that the Maki who has been traveling with the party is the " Ideal Maki " , a version of herself from the true Maki 's heart . Aki and a girl in white called Mai are also pieces of Maki , and the idealized Mikage @-@ cho was created by Maki , and brought into reality when she unexpectedly linked with the Deva System . The group must help Maki avoid Kandori 's path towards isolation and his current actions . The group manage to convince Ideal Maki to overlook her original self 's unconscious actions and join them in fixing the problem . After rescuing the true Maki 's self from the Sea of Souls , where all human life begins , the group must then confront Pandora , an aspect of Maki that wants to use the Deva System to destroy everything . When Pandora is defeated , all the pieces of Maki merge back into one , reversing the effects on the town and restoring her to full health . Philemon meets with the group and congratulates them on their success .

The Snow Queen route , which takes place in the real town of Mikage @-@ cho , is unlocked by investigating an urban legend within the school surrounding a theatrical mask used in performances of " The Snow Queen " : nearly everyone who wears the mask to play the title role has died . After finding the mask , the protagonist encounters Saeko , who puts on the mask and is possessed by a spirit within it . Freezing the entire town , the possessed Saeko generates three towers , with the spirits of those previously killed by the mask as their guardians , whilst setting up her Ice Castle within the high school . Along with Yukino , Ayase , Eriko , and Hidehiko , the protagonist heads out to save Saeko . Philemon contacts them and tells them that the only way to save Saeko is the Demon Mirror , which can remove the source of the mask 's curse . The spirit possessing Saeko turns out to be former classmate Tomomi Fujimori , who was horribly disfigured by the mask when she wore it in place of Saeko . Using the mirror , the group are able to free Saeko and bring Tomomi peace . It is then revealed that Tomomi herself was controlled by the Night Queen Asura , a powerful entity who wants to cloak the world in darkness . Upon defeating the Night Queen , the town is freed from her power .

= = Development = =

The development of Revelations : Persona began in 1994 , after the release of Shin Megami Tensei If The high school setting of If ... was received positively upon release , so Atlus decided to create a dedicated subseries focusing on the inner struggles of young adults . This concept eventually evolved into Persona , and its underlying focus on the " human soul " would become a mainstay of the Persona series . The title Megami Ibunroku was designed to show the title 's status as a spin @-@ off directly related to the Megami Tensei series , although it was removed for later Persona titles . The Persona system was directly inspired by the Guardian system used in If ... , originally designed by future Persona director Katsura Hashino . Veteran Megami Tensei producer Kouji Okada , and character designer Kazuma Kaneko took over these respective staff roles . New to the production team was writer Satomi Tadashi . The script took about a year to write , with the staff going through twenty drafts . The first draft involved the students going on a field trip and being caught in a series of mysterious events . This was one of the more fondly @-@ remembered versions . Shigenori Soejima , a future designer for the series , was involved in designing minor characters and coloring promotional and cover artwork . The main concept behind Persona was a Megami Tensei game that could be enjoyed by people new to the series . The popularity of casual games on the PlayStation was a key factor in making this decision . The development team 's focus on Persona resulted in development on Shin Megami Tensei : Nocturne coming to a near @-@ halt .

Kaneko designed the main cast around multiple notable celebrities and fictional characters of the time , along with members of Atlus staff . While the characters wearing the same uniform helped designate them as a single group , it also made them look the same . To balance against this , Kaneko expressed their individuality through accessories . Atlus staff members also made cameos as minor characters . The character of Philemon was based on Carl Jung 's titular wise old man archetype , described as a contradictory existence . His appearance in @-@ game was based on paintings of Chinese philosopher Zhuang Zhou . Multiple ideas and terms used in @-@ game were based on Jungian psychology and archetypes . The Velvet Room , a key gameplay location , was based on the Black Lodge from Twin Peaks . One of the characters focused on by Kaneko was Maki , who was given multiple forms throughout the story . The first versions created were the original Maki , who had been bed @-@ ridden for a long time , and the " ideal " version , whose inexperience with the outside world and interactions with others made her an expressionless doll . In addition to these forms , black @-@ clothed " Aki " and white @-@ clothed " Mai " were created when Maki 's personality split , representing her extremes . The true Maki represented balance , so Kaneko made her uniform grey . Because of this , the school uniform had to be grey . To represent her psychological immaturity , she was given a ribbon to represent her girlishness , along with a locket she believes can grant wishes .

= = = Ports and localization = = =

Persona was released in Japan on September 20 , 1996 for the PlayStation . The game was ported to Microsoft Windows and released on March 25 , 1999 by ASCII Corporation . The game was compatible with Windows 95 and 98 operating systems . The PlayStation Portable version was directed by Shoji Meguro , the original game 's composer . It was Meguro 's first project as a director . It was decided to remake the original Persona as a large number of new fans had been brought to the series by Persona 3 and 4 , so Atlus decided to give them easier access to the beginning of the series . The game was announced in February 2009 , and released on April 29 of that year . Along with gameplay adjustments and balancing , such as adding adjustable difficulty levels and modifying enemy encounter rates , full @-@ motion cutscenes produced by anime studio Kamikaze Douga were created . The cutscenes were voiced , while the rest of the game used text @-@ based dialogue as in the original . In Europe and Australia , the title was released by Atlus as a digital title on PlayStation Network .

Persona was the first role @-@ playing entry in the Megami Tensei series to be released in the west , with the first Megami Tensei release being action game Jack Bros. in 1995 . While the main Megami Tensei series ' use of Christian imagery made it unsuitable for localization at the time , Persona employed a different naming system to make it more acceptable . Persona was localized by Atlus ' then @-@ new North American branch Atlus USA . Persona was chosen as a series that could help define the company and compete with the likes of Final Fantasy , Suikoden and Breath of Fire . The team that localized Persona was quite small , which made the process quite difficult : not only was there a large amount of text to translate , but the team needed to adjust or change the Japanese references as they feared it might alienate western players . Among the changes were altering the player character 's hairstyle , the ethnic origins of multiple characters , the character and location names , and multiple pieces of dialogue . The entire Snow Queen route was also cut from the game , leaving only the SEBEC story route open for exploration .

The PSP remake 's localization was similar to those done for Persona 3 and 4 , with the dialogue being in tune with modern youth and keeping as close to the original dialogue as possible except for Japan @-@ specific cultural references . To provide a reference for their work , the localization team played through the original version of Persona . The changes made to character names and appearances were all changed back to how they appeared in the original Japanese release , with the exception of a couple of lines that had become fan favorites . These were included as a kind of homage to both players and the company 's history of game localization . The entire Snow Queen quest was also reinstated .

== Music ==

The music for Persona was written by Hidehito Aoki , Kenichi Tsuchiya , Misaki Okibe and Shoji Meguro . Persona was Tsuchiya and Meguro 's first major work , with Meguro beginning shortly before he officially joined Atlus ' internal staff . Meguro worked on the title for approximately a year , composing ten to twenty percent of the score . The first piece composed by Meguro was " The Aria of the Soul " , the theme for the Velvet Room , originally commissioned by Aoki . " The Aria of the Soul " would become a mainstay in future Persona titles . For the PSP re @-@ release , Meguro composed new music alongside remixing original tracks . While he kept the original atmosphere , he also used the experience and musical techniques gained from his work on Persona 3 and 4 . He also tried some new techniques , such as with the opening theme , which began with a pop motif before transitioning into heavy metal , along with changing the important lyrics from English to Japanese .

The official soundtrack album , Persona Be Your True Mind Original Soundtrack , was released on June 17 , 1999 . An arrange album , Megami Ibunroku Persona Original Soundtrack & Arrange Album , was released April 18 , 1999 . In Japan , the official soundtrack for the PSP port was released on April 29 , 2009 . In the United States , the Persona soundtrack was packaged with the game 's retail release .

== Reception ==

During its year of release in Japan , Persona sold 391 @, @ 556 units , reaching # 21 in the 100 best @-@ selling games of that year . Persona was described at the time of its original western release as a " sleeper hit " . The PSP port of the game was also highly successful : while Atlus estimated sales of 50 @, @ 000 and 35 @, @ 000 in Japan and North America , respectively , actual sales reached 160 @, @ 000 and 49 @, @ 000 .

Famitsu was generally positive about the setting and plot , and enjoyed the careful incorporation of Megami Tensei gameplay mechanics alongside new features . GameSpot 's Jeff Gerstmann called it " a truly different RPG " , praising the story , setting and gameplay , while criticizing the quality of the localization and feeling indifferent about the graphics and level layout . IGN called the game " an RPG masterpiece " , praising its departure from fantasy @-@ based RPGs of the time . Game Informer variously complemented the game for its challenging gameplay , and story and setting , with one reviewer calling it " the best PlayStation RPG available . " Jeff Walker , writing a retrospective review of the game for RPGamer , generally shared points of praise and criticism with Gerstmann , summing the game up as " a sure winner " . RPGFan writer EsquE was positive overall about the game , calling it " an achievement in dedicated game design " , and saying in closing that " [Revelations : Persona] deserves much more respect than it has received . "

Reviewing the PSP port , Eric L. Patterson of Play was highly positive about the game 's old @-@ school mechanics and the chance to replay it with an improved localization and the Snow Queen route reinstated . He did say that for fans of the PlayStation 2 Persona games , " [Persona] could very well feel like a punch to the face and a boot to the crotch . " Jeremy Parish , writing for 1UP.com , said that the way Persona broke away from RPG norms through the communication with demons during battle made it essential playing for fans of the genre . He was generally positive about most aspects apart from its visuals . Game Informer 's Joe Juba , despite noting awkward navigation and the inability to appreciate character and enemies designs due to their small sprite size , generally praised the game for improving on the original game 's flaws . Ben Reeves , giving a second opinion on the game as part of the review , generally shared Juba 's points of praise , though found the minimap inadequate . GameSpot 's Lark Anderson was more critical than most , praising the story and improved localization , but finding the combat , navigation and graphics fairly dated compared to both recent and contemporary RPGs . IGN 's Sam Bishop shared critiques about the graphics with other reviewers , but enjoyed most other parts of the game , and particularly appreciated the inclusion of the Snow Queen route . RPGamer 's Glenn Wilson and RPGFan 's Neal Chandran generally echoed other reviewers ' sentiments : Wilson cited it as a less enjoyable game

than the PlayStation 2 Persona entries while still being a quality project , and Chandran called it " a killer trip down memory lane with a pair of high @-@ definition rose @-@ colored glasses . " Shin Megami Tensei : Persona was also awarded RPGFan 's Editor 's Choice Award .

= = Legacy = =

Revelations : Persona was successful enough to establish the Persona series in North America and become a cult classic . The games success prompted the development of a sequel . Persona 2 : Innocent Sin , which was released in 1999 and involved many of the same staff . Persona was adapted into a manga titled Megami Ibunroku Persona . Originally serialized in 1996 , it was later reissued in 2009 . In 2006 , Atlus and mobile company Bbmf released a mobile version of the game , Megami Ibunroku Persona : Chapter of the Foreign Tower of Emptiness . The game is a 3D dungeon crawler set within the locations of Persona . The unexpected success of the PSP port led to the development of enhanced remakes for both Innocent Sin and its sequel , Persona 2 : Eternal Punishment . Both these ports were also directed by Meguro .