

# Japanese Stereotypes in Medievalist Games: *The Onimusha Series*

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# *Onimusha* 鬼武者 series



*Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*

- *Onimusha: Warlords* (2001)
  - *Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny* (2002)
  - *Onimusha Tactics* (2003)
  - *Onimusha Blade Warriors* (2003)
  - *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege* (2004)
  - *Onimusha: Dawn of Dreams* (2006)
  - *Onimusha: Way of the Sword* (2026)
- 
- Developer: Capcom (Ōsaka, Japan)
  - Producer: Inafune Keiji

# *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*



**Oda Nobunaga 織田信長**

## <Ally>

- Akechi Samanosuke (Mitsuhide's vassal)
- Jacques Blanc (French DGSE officer)
- Michelle Aubert (French Army lieutenant)
- Henri Blanc (Jacques' son)
- Ako (*Tengu* 天狗 girl)
- Akechi Mitsuhide (Nobunaga's vassal)

## <enemy>

- Oda Nobunaga (Sengoku lord)
- Guildenstern (greatest Genma scientist)
- Mori Ranmaru (Nobunaga's vassal)
- Honda Tadakatsu (Tokugawa Ieyasu's

# What is *Oni* 鬼 (Japanede Demons)?



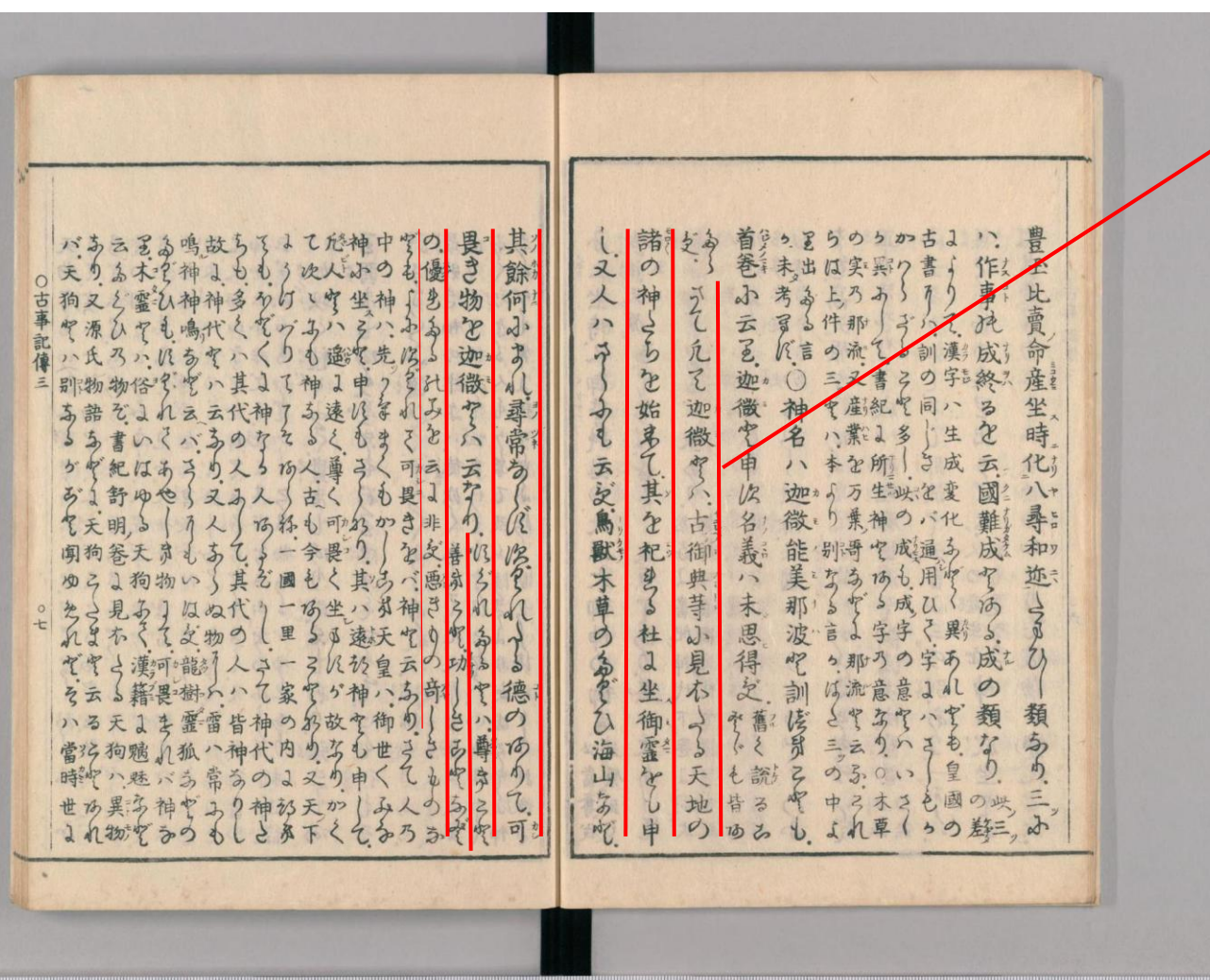
鬼 *Oni* (Japanese) / *Guǐ* (Chinese)

- *Yōkai* 妖怪 (Jananese monster)
- Eviel deities in Shinto
- Buddhist yakshas
- Grudge ghost
- Cruel criminals
- Messengers of the *kami* 神 in Shinto
- Prison officers in the Hell in Buddhism
  
- Blacksmiths in mountain?
- Ainu people?
- Westerners?

# What is the Definition of *kami* 神 in Shinto?

“*Kami* are the deities in heaven and earth in mythology, or spirits enshrined in Shinto shrines. Not to mention human beings, birds, animals, plants, oceans, mountains, and whatever else is uncommonly great and rare are called *kami*. The meaning of great is not necessarily limited to what is precious, excellent, good or meritorious. **Even the wicked and the suspicious are *kami*, if they are powerful or rare.**”

→ Devil and Satan also can be *kami* if they are great.

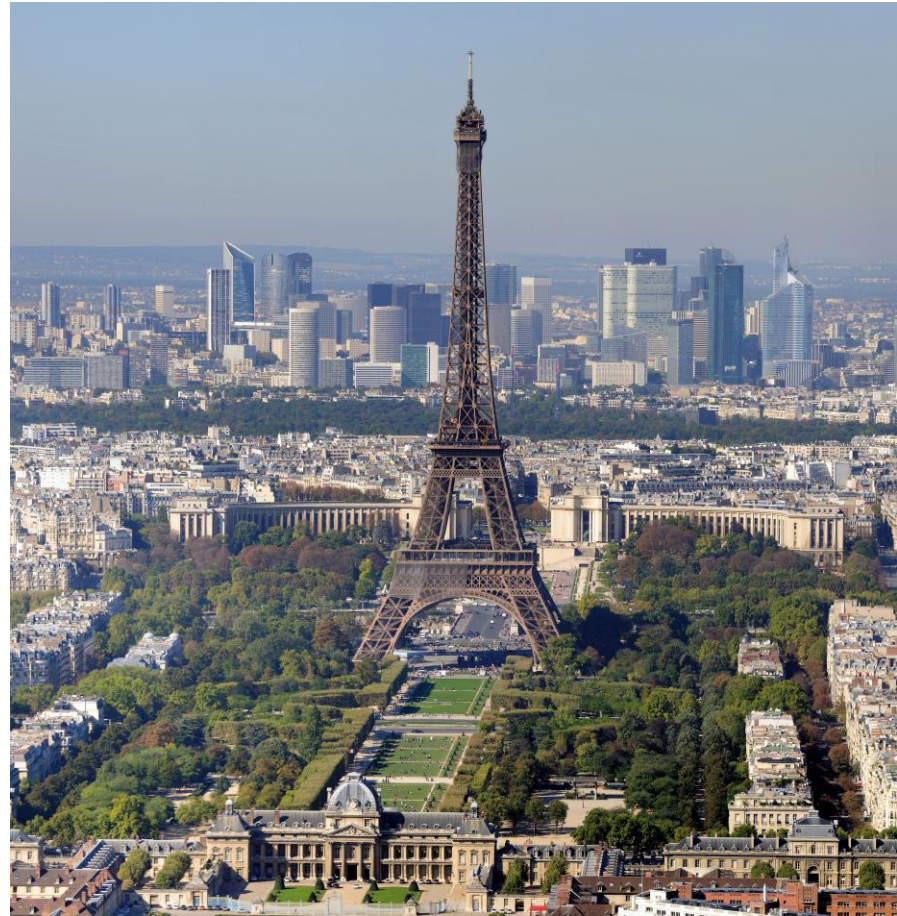


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# Time and Space

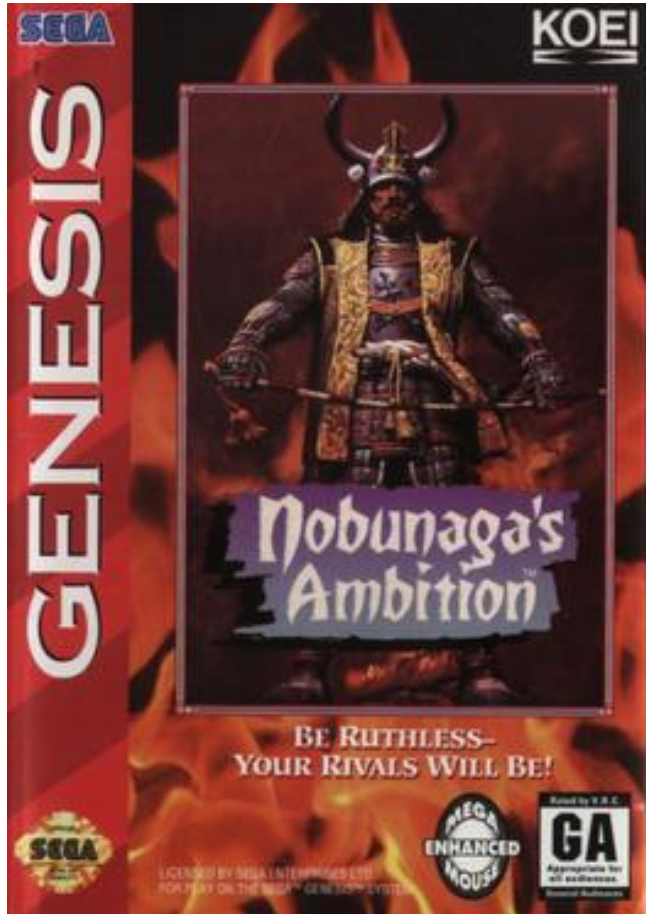


**Medieval Kyoto**



**Contemporary Paris**

# Balancing between historical fact and fiction



***Nobunaga's Ambition***

- "The choice of Paris as the setting for the game was a result of his desire to create something that no one would have imagined. Which is why the story, while seemingly unconventional, is so well conceived and highly regarded not only as a historical game but also as a science fiction game." (Inafune Keiji)

→ It is not a historical simulation game like the *Nobunaga's Ambition*

# Bad examples of poor historical/cultural research



*Assasin's Creed Shadows*

- Excessive political considerations made the protagonist a black man who was not even a samurai
- Many Chinese and Korean landscapes and buildings are confused with Japanese one
- Images of existent Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples used without their permission
- Insulting expressions towards Shinto and Buddhism
- Atomic bomb-damaged remains appear

→ Developed into a political issue that is taken up at the Diet of Japan

# Stereotypes of Samurai



- Primary weapon was a spear
- Swords dropped the enemy from horseback (not slay)
- The main flying weapon was the projectile
- Guns were disadvantageous in close combat

Stereotype-based one-upmanship  
between samurai  
(Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin)

→ Reflects modern samurai stereotypes

# Future prospects



***Onimusha: Way of the Sword***

- *Onimusha: VR Shadow Team* (VR game in amusement arcades) has been operational from 2025
- The latest work *Onimusha: Way of the Sword* for PS5, Xbox Series X/S and Steam is scheduled for release in 2026

URL: <https://www.capcom-games.com/onimusha/ws/en-uk/>

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Thank you for your attention

ご清聴ありがとうございました