

= Shin Megami Tensei =

Shin Megami Tensei (? ? ???? , literally " True Goddess Reincarnation ") is a post @-@ apocalyptic role @-@ playing video game developed and published by Atlus . Originally released for the Super Famicom in 1992 in Japan , it has been ported to multiple systems and eventually released in the West for iOS in 2014 . It is the third game in the Megami Tensei series and the first in the central Shin Megami Tensei series . The gameplay uses first @-@ person navigation of dungeons and turn @-@ based battles against demons . The player can recruit demons as allies by talking to them rather than fighting them , and two to three demons can be fused to create new demons .

The story follows a nameless protagonist who lives in near @-@ future Tokyo . When a portal to the realm of demons is opened , United States officials order a nuclear attack on Tokyo . Transported with two other supporting characters thirty years into the future , the protagonist finds the Earth ruined by a demon invasion , which is now the stage for an escalating conflict between the Order of Messiah and the Ring of Gaea , conflicting cults who wish to bring about kingdoms for their respective patron deities (YHVH and Lucifer) . The story is influenced by moral decisions the protagonist makes , aligning him either with the Order , the Ring of Gaea , or setting him up as an independent agent .

From the start of the production , Atlus staff saw Shin Megami Tensei as a chance to create a game with the company 's brand on it . The staff saw it as a remake of the previous Megami Tensei game ; because of this , they knew what was going to happen in the story , and the development went smoothly . The story went through multiple revisions , and many settings were inspired by the staff 's personal lives . The character and demon designs were done by Kazuma Kaneko , who used mythical figures and multiple clothing styles in his designs . Reception and sales for the game have been highly positive , and its success helped launch Atlus as a developer and publisher , along with popularizing the Megami Tensei series .

= = Gameplay = =

In Shin Megami Tensei , players take the role of an unnamed protagonist , a teenage boy who can communicate with demons using a computer program . The gameplay is similar to that of other games in the series : players make their way through dungeons and fight against demons in a first @-@ person perspective . The protagonist uses a variety of weapons and items , with the primary weapons being swords and guns . Such items are bought from merchants scattered around the world map . In special areas , the protagonist can use the in @-@ game currency to restore health and magic points for themselves and their demons , remove status ailments , and revive fallen demons . Special Terminals scattered across the world map allow the player to save their game , and they can use them to teleport between terminals in different areas of Tokyo .

Battles are turn @-@ based , and consist of players letting the characters in their party attack with swords or guns , summon demons , or cast magic spells ; both demons and humans , with the exception of the player character , are able to use magic . By participating in battles , human characters in the player 's party receive experience points ; by accumulating these points , the characters ' levels rise and new abilities are randomly learned . Players can choose to talk to demons instead of fighting them ; they can ask the demons for items or money , try to get them to go away , or try to form an alliance with them . At some places , called " Cathedrals of Shadows " , players can fuse two to three allied demons into one single , more powerful demon ; as demons do not receive experience points , this is the only way for the player to increase their demons ' power . Magnetite is used as a fuel for allied demons , and is used up by summoned demons as the player character walks around in the dungeons ; if players run out of magnetite , summoned demons take damage .

The way demons behave is based on their and the protagonist 's respective alignments . Alignments come in two types , Light @-@ Neutral @-@ Dark , and Law @-@ Neutral @-@ Chaos . A demon 's alignment can range across both alignments , resulting in nine possible stances that

affect how they behave and what actions in battle or story progression pleases them . The protagonist 's alignment changes depending on choices made during the story , and in response the attitudes of people and demons change ; for instance , demons who are law @-@ aligned will refuse to form an alliance with chaos @-@ aligned players . Additionally , depending on their alignment , players will not be let into certain areas ; for instance , the Order of Messiah will not let chaos @-@ aligned players into their churches .

= = Synopsis = =

= = = Setting and characters = = =

Shin Megami Tensei takes place in a postmodern Tokyo , first in the year " 199X " , and then 30 years later in a post @-@ apocalyptic version of the city . A rift has been opened to another world , allowing demons to invade Tokyo ; by using a computer program , humans are able to communicate with and summon the demons . Across the story , moral alignments are portrayed in various ways : alongside the middle " neutral " pathway , the " law " faction believes in establishing a logical order at the expense of feeling and freedom , while the " chaos " faction espouses unlimited freedom for the individual while discarding the weak .

The game includes four human " heroes " : the player character , the Hero , who is a teenage boy living with his mother in Kichijoji in Tokyo ; the Heroine , who is the leader of a resistance force which tries to protect Tokyo ; and the Law Hero and Chaos Hero , who represent the alignments " law " and " chaos " , respectively . Among other characters are ambassador Thorman (????? , T?ruman) and general Gotou (???) , who lead the United States military and the Japan Self @-@ Defense Forces , respectively ; the archangel Michael (??? , Mikaeru) and the demon Asura @-@ ou (?????) , who lead the Order of Messiah and the Ring of Gaea , respectively ; and the demons Lilith (??? , Ririsu) and Lucifer (????? , Rushif?) , who use the pseudonyms Yuriko (???) and Louis Cyphre (?? ? ????? , Rui Saif?) , respectively .

= = = Plot = = =

The game begins with the Hero dreaming that he meets the Law Hero , the Chaos Hero , and a woman named Yuriko ; she promises that she will become the Hero 's partner . He wakes up , and receives an e @-@ mail with a computer program for summoning demons attached . While out on an errand , he learns that a scientist has opened a portal to the Abyss , which allows demons to enter Tokyo . He also meets Yuriko , who says she will fulfill her promise . The next night , the Hero again dreams that he meets the Law Hero and Chaos Hero , and that they save the Heroine from a sacrificial ritual . The next day , he meets the Law Hero and Chaos Hero in reality ; they reveal that they had the same dreams . News of the demons spread , and the US military , led by ambassador Thorman , decides to intervene . The Japan Self @-@ Defense Forces , led by general Gotou , opposes them , as they see demons as the ancient spirits of the land . A third group , led by the Heroine , tries to prevent conflict between the other two . She gets captured by Gotou 's forces ; they are about to publicly execute her under supervision by Yuriko , but she is saved by the Hero , Law Hero , and Chaos Hero . Players can choose to support Thorman or Gotou , or to reject both ; regardless of what they choose , the conflict escalates until Thorman launches missiles towards Tokyo . The Heroine is killed , but saves the Hero , Law Hero , and Chaos Hero by using magic to teleport them to another plane of existence .

When they return to Tokyo , thirty years have passed , and the world lies in ruins . Both demons and humans live in Tokyo , and two warring groups have formed : the Order of Messiah , who is building a cathedral and wants to bring about the Thousand @-@ Year Kingdom , and the Ring of Gaea , who intends to summon Lucifer and wants freedom . While exploring the city , the Hero meets the Heroine , who has been reincarnated , and she joins the group . They keep traversing the ruins , until the Chaos Hero decides to leave , and fuses himself with a demon to gain power ; they

move on without him , until the Law Hero 's soul gets taken by an attacking demon . The Chaos Hero joins the Ring of Gaea , while the Law Hero 's soul gets reincarnated as the new Messiah . Both try to get the Hero to join their respective side ; players can choose to support either , or to reject both . Regardless of what they choose , the Order of Messiah finishes building their cathedral , and a great flood appears , drowning people who were not inside the cathedral at the time . Survivors set up camps inside the cathedral ; the Order of Messiah takes control of the top floors , while the Ring of Gaea occupies the basement floors .

After this point , the story continues differently depending on the Hero 's alignment . If it is " law " , the Law Hero gets killed in a battle with the Chaos Hero , while the Hero and the Heroine go to the basement . On their way they have to kill the Chaos Hero and fight Yuriko , who turns out to be the demon Lilith in disguise ; she calls the Hero " Adam " , and says she wanted to create a new age and live with him forever , which is why she tried to execute the Heroine . After defeating her in battle , the Hero and the Heroine reach the basement and kill the demon Asura @-@ ou ; they then go to the cathedral 's roof , where they are thanked by a messenger from God . If the Hero 's alignment instead is " chaos " , he and the Heroine must go to the top floor and kill the archangel Michael , and on their way kill the Law Hero ; the Chaos Hero dies , too , because of the magical ring he has been wearing . On the roof , they meet Lucifer , who says that a new era will begin , where both demons and humans are free ; he also warns them that God still is alive . If the Hero 's alignment instead is " neutral " , he and the Heroine must kill the Law Hero , the Chaos Hero , Asura @-@ ou , and Michael , and fight Yuriko . On the roof , they meet Taishang Laojun , who thanks them and says that balance is needed to achieve happiness ; he asks the Hero and the Heroine to lead humanity to a future that doesn 't rely on gods or demons . The game ends with the Heroine saying that those who have died will be reborn , and that it is time for creation and rebuilding .

= = Development = =

From the beginning of production , Atlus staff saw Shin Megami Tensei as a chance to develop a game with the company 's brand on it . The main staff included director Y?suke Niino , producer Hideyuki Yokoyama , programmer and future Megami Tensei director Kouji Okada , writers Ryutaro Ito and Kazunari Suzuki , and composer Tsukasa Masuko . Kazuma Kaneko worked on multiple aspects of the game , including character and sprite design , the world 's concept and visual design , and the creation of visual assets . Atlus saw the game as a remake of the previous game in the Megami Tensei series , Digital Devil Story : Megami Tensei II . As such , the staff knew what would happen with the story , so development went smoothly . An early factor in the game was the inclusion of a Law Hero and a Chaos Hero , and a protagonist who would initially be neutral and whose actions would affect their alignment . Kaneko defined this blending of different alignments as " a sort of hodgepodge " when compared to future games in the series . When designing it , the team slowly decided that they wanted to break the then @-@ current gaming status quo using its aesthetic and content . That feeling , along with granting it a sense of reality through use of dark imagery , would later define the series . The main theme of Shin Megami Tensei was a person waking up to inevitable destruction and being able to do nothing but rely on their own abilities . The scenario took a long time to finalize , being revised a number of times by multiple staff members . During earlier drafts , it was planned that the finale of the story would take place in Israel after an extensive journey across Japan .

One of the reasons the development team chose Tokyo as the main setting was that its turbulent history , going through multiple phases of development and often suffering severe damage in wars or due to natural disasters , made it comparable with the fantasy settings of other games at the time . In a later interview , an Atlus staff member stated that this setting and style made it the antithesis of traditional fantasy RPGs , adding that this resulted in the game developing a punk spirit . Because of the post @-@ apocalyptic setting of Megami Tensei II , the development team wanted to depict a time before the apocalypse . The decision to set the game in Tokyo was made by Suzuki and Kaneko , and was influenced by manga such as Violence Jack , Devilman , and Fist of the North Star . Kichij?ji was decided to be the game 's starting point due to Kaneko , Suzuki , and Ito all

having lived in or near the area , or having visited it often . The abandoned Terminal Echo building there fascinated them , making them wonder how a building in such a prime location could remain unoccupied ; Ito described it as two floors of arcade cabinets , with the rest of the building feeling like a ghost town . This fascination led to it being included as a dungeon in the game . While designing the maps , Kaneko wanted to use wire @-@ frame models , but the Super Famicom 's limited capacities meant this idea was scrapped .

By the end of development , multiple members of staff voiced dissatisfaction with the final product . Ito and Suzuki felt that the portrayals of the Law and Chaos Heroes were imbalanced , with the Chaos Hero being too emotional and the Law Hero being unsympathetic . They also saw the demon fusion system as too difficult for players to master . Okada , while commenting on what improvements would be made for the next game , stated that there were too many useless items in the game . Niino felt that the game 's pacing and flow needed to be addressed , as after naming the characters , the player immediately is prompted to divide their status points .

= = = Character designs = = =

In addition to handling the graphics , Kaneko designed the character and demon designs for the game . The Hero 's and the Heroine 's clothes were designed to be futuristic ; the Heroine was designed to be a protector , with clothes inspired by American football equipment . The Law Hero and Chaos Hero have ordinary clothes at first ; the Chaos Hero was designed to look unsophisticated , with a bad posture and military clothes . After their metamorphoses , the Law Hero wears clothes designed to look priestly ; Kaneko did not have a specific form in mind when designing them , but thought they looked " Gucci @-@ like " . The Chaos Hero 's clothes after his metamorphosis were designed to be similar to the character Piccolo from the Dragon Ball manga series ; his hair style was also based on Dragon Ball , specifically on that of the " super saiyan " transformations in that series . Kaneko wanted the Chaos Hero change back and forth between human and demon form to tie in more closely with this design theme , but the concept was abandoned . During production , all the characters had names attached to them to help with identification during event planning . The character Louis Cyphre was inspired by the character of the same name from the 1987 movie Angel Heart . Some characters , such as Stephen and General Gotou , are based on real @-@ life people ; in the game files , they are identified as " hoking " and " mishima " , respectively . According to Ito , the character Thorman 's name was originally inspired by the Norse god of thunder , but after release , he realized that the name was highly similar to that of Harry S. Truman , the American president who approved the atomic attacks against Japan .

For the demon design , Kaneko took inspiration from Medieval woodblock prints , wooden carvings from South America , masks from Micronesia , and terracotta figurines from the Middle East . His designs of angelic characters were influenced by descriptions from the Book of Ezekiel of angels having multiple strange forms , such as multiple arms or heads . In addition to traditional demons and monsters , Kaneko designed versions of less @-@ frequented figures from Celtic and Southeast Asian mythology . The theme he used when drawing them was " fear " , which extended to both obvious threats and the internal dread the creatures evoked . The graphics for most demons were directly drawn as sprites , without concept art , to make sure that the design and the graphics would work within the hardware limitations of the Super Famicom . Certain important characters , and some demons who the player would be guaranteed to meet , were drawn as concept art first . Several demons were designed in a way that allowed parts of their graphics to be reused ; for instance , the demon Cerberus ' body is also used for Shanhui and Nue , with a different color palette . Demon fusions were designed around the dichotomy of Law and Chaos , but in hindsight it was stated that this provided little fusion variety .

= = = Music = = =

The game 's music was composed by Tsukasa Masuko , with arrangements by Masuko and Tatsuya Nishiwaki . Masuko considered Shin Megami Tensei to be an experimental work : it was the

first time he had created music for the Super Famicom , so he was not familiar with the console 's specifications . During composition , he needed to check the specifications repeatedly to see what he could do within the hardware limitations . For the PC Engine port , the music was arranged by Hitoshi Sakimoto .

A soundtrack album , Shin Megami Tensei Law & Chaos Disc , was released on February 24 , 1993 by Victor Entertainment under the catalog number VICL @-@ 40046 / 7 . It includes two discs : the first contains the music as it sounds in @-@ game , and the second contains arrangements by Nishiwaki . A second album , Shin Megami Tensei Sound Collection , was released on March 5 , 2003 , by SME Visual Works under the catalog number SVWC @-@ 7175 / 6 . It includes music from the original and PlayStation versions of Shin Megami Tensei , Shin Megami Tensei II , and Shin Megami Tensei If ... , along with selected tracks from Shin Megami Tensei : Nine .

= = Release = =

Shin Megami Tensei was first released on the Super Famicom on October 30 , 1992 in Japan ; it remained exclusive to that region for 22 years . It was the first Megami Tensei title not to be published by Namco . Instead , it was published by Atlus , which caused some complaints as to why Namco was not publishing the game . A fan translation of the Super Famicom version has been developed . Subsequent ports were released on the PC Engine (December 25 , 1993) , Mega @-@ CD (February 25 , 1994) , the PlayStation (May 31 , 2001) , and Game Boy Advance (March 28 , 2003) . Atlus was responsible for the PlayStation port , and the staff were divided on whether to make it a complete port or something new . Those who wanted a direct port won through . The PC Engine port included added story scenes . SIMS Co . , Ltd. was in charge of the Mega CD port , which included additional demons . The Game Boy Advance version , which was the first time Shin Megami Tensei appeared on a portable platform , included the ability to exchange demons and items using the platform 's data exchange capacities . It also featured remastered music and alterations to ease the playing experience . The game was released in February 2012 for iOS and November of that year for Android . These mobile ports were based on the Game Boy Advance version , including all the port 's features . The iOS port was localized and released in North America and Europe in March 18 , 2014 .

= = = Localization = = =

Shin Megami Tensei , as with many other early Megami Tensei titles , was initially not localized for the West due to its controversial content such as the portrayal of religious elements . This content clashed with Nintendo 's strict content policy guidelines . The PlayStation port was also prevented from being localized by Sony 's then @-@ current approval policy . The possibility of later localization after the series became established in the West were stalled due to the age of the game , which would have put it at a disadvantage in the modern gaming market .

According to Nich Maragos , the editor of the English version of Shin Megami Tensei , it was already too late to localize the PlayStation and Game Boy Advance versions of the game by the time the Megami Tensei series had " taken off " in the US ; Atlus normally does not have an interest in localizing mobile games , but saw the iOS version of the game as a perfect opportunity to fill in one of the gaps in the series . The localization project was slow at first , as it took time to extract the files from the game , so the localization team started by playing the game in order to find out what kinds of dialogue text and system messages it contained . After receiving the files , they translated the text , which was then sent to the editors ; the edited text was sent back to the translators , who checked that nothing had been lost in translation , after which the text was inserted into the game . A challenge for the localization team was character limitations : only four rows of text , with 28 characters each , were able to be displayed at a time , and at some points this had to be limited even further in order to avoid graphical glitches . This was solved by modifying the game to allow for more text boxes as needed . Later Megami Tensei games , which had been localized before Shin Megami Tensei , influenced the localization , as several of them include terms or quotes from the

game . For instance , the catastrophe in Shin Megami Tensei is referred to as the " Great Cataclysm " in Devil Summoner : Raidou Kuzunoha vs. The Soulless Army , while Persona 4 and Shin Megami Tensei IV include several quotes and terms from the game . The already translated Shin Megami Tensei quotes from the Persona 4 localization were reused verbatim in the localization of Shin Megami Tensei .

= = Reception = =

According to Ito , the Super Famicom release was a great success for the company , helping establishing it as both a developer and publisher . While a success , the game also received criticism from players for its high encounter rate and difficulties using the map and in @-@ game instructions . At the end of 2001 , the PlayStation version was the 119th best selling video game of the year in Japan , with 85 @, @ 991 sold copies .

On release , Famitsu magazine gave the original Super Famicom version a score of 36 out of 40 , with all four reviewers giving it a 9 out of 10 . This made it one of their three highest @-@ rated games of 1992 , along with Dragon Quest V and World of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck . Shin Megami Tensei was also one of only eleven games to have received a Famitsu score of 36 / 40 or above up until 1992 . For subsequent console ports , Famitsu gave scores of 25 / 40 (PCE) , 28 / 40 (MD) , 30 / 40 (PS) , and 27 / 40 (GBA) .

The website Touch Arcade said that they loved the game , and that it was one of their favorite role @-@ playing games on iOS . They did however think that the game was bad at explaining things , including the system of saving one 's progress . Pocket Gamer , too , thought that things were not explained enough . For instance , they said that the game does not guide players from point A to point B , and often does not even let players know where to start looking for point B. RPGFan echoed this , and said that it is not uncommon for players to wander around , wondering where to go . Gamezebo said they did not think the battle system was particularly exciting , but appreciated how the conversation system and the demon fusion adds elements of risk and reward to the game . The British newspaper Metro found the game more entertaining than most role @-@ playing games from its time . Gamezebo found the iOS version 's touch screen @-@ based virtual buttons clumsy to use , while Pocket Gamer found the interface to work " reasonably well " while using the landscape mode , and RPGFan found the interface to be excellent . Both Gamezebo and Touch Arcade wished the game had been a " universal app " , so that it could have been played on other devices than iPhone and iPod Touch without having the graphics upscaled .

Several reviewers appreciated the game 's plot . Gamezebo said that it was an aspect of the game that stood out in a positive way , and pointed out how good they thought the English translation was . Touch Arcade called the story one of the game 's strengths , and said that it was impressive , despite how it had a tendency to be " ham @-@ fisted " . Metro appreciated how the game avoided role @-@ playing cliches , such as how it took place in a modern Japan rather than in a " Tolkien @-@ esque fantasy world " ; they also liked its " unrestrained style of storytelling " . RPGFan found the story to be good and macabre , and surprisingly relevant even in 2014 . They disliked that there was very little character development , and how scenes that " traditionally [would] be poignant " , especially death scenes , were handled in a nonchalant manner .

Touch Arcade called the graphics " good , but not great " , though reasonable given the game 's age , but that some demon designs were " spectacular works of art " . RPGFan found the majority of the game 's graphics to be " functional , but not too appealing " , and said that it was easy to get lost due to the bland textures of the walls and the floors . They did however like the graphics used in battles and story sections , which they found well @-@ drawn and detailed . They praised the designs of the game 's female characters , especially Nekomata , Lamia , and Yuriko , but felt that the designs of the male characters were bland . Touch Arcade found the music to be fantastic . RPGFan said that every piece fits into the scene where it is played , but that few were memorable . They did note " Ginza " as an exception , which they felt was so well @-@ composed that it would sound good in any format .

= = Legacy = =

The success of Shin Megami Tensei led to multiple sequels over the coming years and made the Megami Tensei franchise more popular . Development on a sequel began immediately after the success of Shin Megami Tensei . Shin Megami Tensei II , which directly continued the story of Shin Megami Tensei , was released in 1994 . Multiple other Shin Megami Tensei titles have followed and brought the series acclaim overseas . Kaneko 's concept of the Chaos Hero 's transformation was resurrected as the main gameplay mechanic of Shin Megami Tensei : Digital Devil Saga .

In 2015 , developer Toby Fox cited Shin Megami Tensei as inspiration for Undertale , specifically its talking system .