

# The Shinii

The Shinii are a human race from the distant island known as Shin, off the coast of the continent of Elind. A deeply proud and honourable people, Shinii society is divided between the nobility and the peasantry, with a growing "middle class" of merchants. The nobility remain in power due to the elite warrior caste, the Hameki, masters of the sword and any other weapon. The ruler of Shin is the Golden Emperor, and his chief general bears the title of Shogun.

The noble houses in Shin are divided into four major clans: Golden Dawn (including the Emperor's house, House Tokugawa), Jade Lotus, White Crane and Black Mantis. Each house has a ruling lord, or daimyo, who sits on the council of his respective clan. There is one house in each clan who is the ruling house for that clan. There are also minor houses allied to the major houses.

Although it is not unheard of for houses within a clan to be at war with each other, should the clan require the aid of these houses, all differences are set aside until the house's duty to its clan is completed. All houses and clans openly obey the will of The Golden Emperor of Shin, and no house or clan has moved against the Imperial House in over 1000 years. However, it is common knowledge that the Black Mantis Clan are anti-imperialist (of course, this would change instantly the moment a House Lord from that Clan became Emperor).

Shinii do not follow the clothing fashions of other cultures except out of necessity. Among the nobility a robe called the kimono is often worn by both men and women, with the men wearing loose trousers known as hakama, and possibly a jacket known as the happi. The peasantry wear more practical garb suitable for working in the fields or their workshops.

Shinii religion is a complex matter. They know the Worldsmith as Cao-Shir and call the Dreamwyrms Svan Lung, but Shinii also worship a large array of deities. The two religious philosophies most common in Shin are the Towan and Shan-tun faiths: a Shinii will follow both at the same time, despite their seeming contradictions.

Shan-tun does not have a founder nor does it have sacred scriptures. Propaganda and preaching are not common either, because Shan-tun is deeply rooted in the Shinii people and traditions. Shan-tun "Gods" are called Kami. They are sacred spirits which take the form of things important to life, such as wind, rain, mountains, trees, and rivers (Elements). Humans become Kami after they die and are revered by their families as Ancestral Kami. The Kami of extraordinary people are even enshrined at some shrines. The Sun Goddess Amaterui is considered Shan-tun's most important Kami, and is the ancestor of the Emperor. In contrast to many other religions, there are no absolutes in Shan-tun. There is no absolute right and wrong, and nobody is perfect. Shan-tun is an optimistic faith, as humans are thought to be fundamentally good, and evil is believed to be caused by evil spirits and Oni. Consequently, the purpose of most Shan-tun rituals is to battle and keep away these evil spirits and Oni by purification, prayers and offerings to the Kami.

The Towan faith differs from that of other religions as it does not place its teachings in the hands of gods. Rather it is seen as a power which envelopes, surrounds and flows through all things, living and non-living, that regulates natural processes and nourishes balance in the Universe. "Out of the chaos in the universe came "Wun", the bright, warm, effusive, heavenly, female, and "Toaw", the dark, secretive, silent, deep, earthly, male. Counterparts and conflicting opposites, they complemented each other in the formation of a creative force whose products were heaven and earth". These are the first Teachings of Towan faith. Everything has an equal and an opposite. It is indeed where the faith derives its name, which means "Balance of Opposites".

## History of the Shinii

The fundamentals of Shinii history (as seen by the Shinii themselves) can be summed up in a few sentences. Shin is the oldest and most civilised human nation in the entire world, led by the descendants of the Sun Goddess. It produces the finest art, weapons, craftsmanship and warriors of any nation in history. It has never lost a war. So say the wisest men in Shin, and as Shin is the home of the wisest men in the world (according to the Shinii), it must be true.

A more detailed history of Shin is difficult for outsiders to learn, involving as it does the politics and secrets of a nation with thousands of years of history and a bureaucracy that prides itself on subtlety. A typical Shinii historical anecdote makes almost no sense to a non-Shinii, as it almost always involves intense rivalries between conflicting schools of swordsmanship, arms of government, clans, houses and families, a tangled web of loyalties and debts, the direct intervention of at least one Kami, a huge battle and at least one person killing themselves for reasons of honour.

The Shinii find Avmarian history just as baffling.

Many centuries ago a Shinii war fleet was blown wildly off-course and driven to Avmar, where the Shinii landed and settled in the mountains of Region. Initial contact between locals and the settlers were confused and sparse, and as neither side spoke the other's language misunderstandings were common. As a result this Shinii warband became known to the Avmarians as "the Hameki", and that name is still used for those of Shinii descent from Region. Although never numerous, these Avmarian Shinii have made a significant contribution to Avmar: Akiero Hasekawa, a Hameki, rose to the position of King Dagravane's Armourer during the King's second reign, and it is believed that it was a Hameki who introduced the concept of paper money to the Treasury.

## Ky Power

Ky is a martial and mental discipline practiced by some Shinii, Shantun and Towan Monks and others who follow a similar coda or training practice. Ky allows the performance of remarkable abilities solely because of physical and mental training. It is a primarily unarmed discipline, although some of its arts can be used with weapons. A student of Ky can display great feats of strength, endurance and athletics, and a master of Ky can perform seemingly impossible acts of dexterity and combat mastery.

## Face and Honour

The Shinii concept of honour is different to the Avmarian one. If an Avmarian feels that his lord is about to do something dishonourable, he might tell his lord how he feels, or he might tell his lord's Duke. Both these options would be unthinkable to a Shinii: to speak against one's lord is disrespectful, and to go above one's lord is treason. Instead, a Shinii would commit suicide, to shame his lord into reconsidering his actions.

## Shinii racial rules

- A Shinii is on standard Human TB and Power Gain and Locational split.
- As they are not native to Evermore, Shinii do not gain any natural healing.
- Shinii can be any Human class that is not restricted to Avmarian humans only.
- Alternatively, a Shinii may follow one of the Shinii Racial Classes found in Restricted 2.
- Shinii do not get to roll for Previous Occupations.
- Costume: Shinii should incorporate Japanese or Chinese traditional clothing in their costumes.
- Roleplaying a Shinii: Be polite, respectful and reserved. Avenge any insult to your honour.
- Alignment: Shinii may be of any alignment, although Chaotic Shinii cannot learn Ky Power.