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## Samurai

Samurai is the term for the military nobility of pre-industrial Japan. They are honorable men and formidable opponents, who command respect anywhere they travel. In the game, samurai are focused and intimidating fighters who train in a particular style of combat. As they advance in level, they gain greater prowess in their combat style, to the point of being able to slay the most powerful opponents in a single blow.

### Adventures:

**Characteristics:** Samurai are noblemen and elite warriors, who live and die according to a strict code of ethics known as bushido, or “way of the warrior.” (see the sidebar, left.) At its core, bushido is a system of honor and loyalty that governs every aspect of the samurai’s way of life...thus, a samurai who does not follow bushido is not a samurai at all.

Each samurai focuses his training on one particular fighting style, which can take his entire lifetime to master. While the stereotypical samurai is a student of the katana, it is important to note that samurai mastered a wide variety of weapons and occupied all ranks of the battlefield.

A samurai’s training encompasses more than combat, however. From an early age, all samurai are instructed in art and culture, including but not limited to music, dance, calligraphy, literature, and philosophy. A warrior’s mind was considered as much a part of his body as his arms and legs: to neglect one would weaken the whole. Indeed, many samurai are remembered not for the battles they fought, but for the poems they wrote or the songs they sang.

**Alignment:** only characters of Lawful Good alignment have the discipline and honor to follow the strict code of bushido.

### Background:

### Races:

### Other Classes:

### Abilities:

TABLE: THE SAMURAI

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+1	+2	+0	+2	Focused Strike +2, Staredown
2	+2	+3	+0	+3	Combat Style
3	+3	+3	+1	+3	Iaijutsu
4	+4	+4	+1	+4	Fearless
5	+5	+4	+1	+4	Focused Strike +4
6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Improved Combat Style
7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Damage reduction 1/-
8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6	
9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	Staredown (30’ range)
10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Focused Strike +6
11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+7	Combat Style Mastery, DR 2/-
12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+8	Perfect Strike
13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+8	
14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+9	Staredown (move action), Crippling Strike
15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+9	Focused Strike +8, DR 3/-
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+10	
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Combat Style Perfection
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Deadly Strike
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Damage reduction 4/-
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Focused Strike +10

### CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the samurai.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiencies:** Samurai are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. They are proficient with all types of armor, but not with any kind of shield.

**Focused Strike (Ex):** By concentrating on a chosen foe, the samurai can deliver powerful blows that deal devastating amounts of damage.

To use this ability, the samurai first selects a single opponent that he threatens. The samurai then makes a Concentration check (DC = selected opponent’s Armor Class). If successful, he may make a single attack against that creature with a +2 competence bonus to the hit and damage rolls. Using this ability is a full-round action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

If the Concentration check is unsuccessful, the samurai may still make an attack against the target opponent, but the

### GAME RULE INFORMATION

**Alignment:** any Lawful

**Hit Dice:** d10

**MP per Level:** None

**Starting Gold:** 4d6 × 10 gp

### CLASS SKILLS

The samurai’s Class Skills (and the key abilities for each) are Concentration (Con), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge [history] (Int), Knowledge [nobility and royalty] (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), and Swim (Str).

**Skill Points at 1st Level:**  
(4 + Intelligence modifier) × 4

**Skill Points at Each Additional Level:** 4 + Intelligence modifier

### The Code of Bushido

A samurai shall be a model of moral purity. Samurai shall abstain from alcohol, drugs, gambling, and women. A samurai’s honor is his most valuable possession.

A samurai shall always put the needs of others, even his enemies, ahead of his own. (He will not eat until all others have eaten, for example.)

A samurai must always tell the truth, even when speaking to his enemies. If the truth would bring dishonor to his liege, his family, or his name, the samurai may remain silent...but he must never attempt to lie, cloud the truth, or deceive others in any way. Deception, even to one’s enemies, is the highest dishonor.

A samurai will obey and defend his liege to the death, even if his liege is acting in a dishonorable manner. It is never the samurai’s place to question his liege, merely to obey and act on his behalf.

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bonus to hit and damage does not apply. In the event of a critical hit, the extra damage from the Focused Strike is not multiplied. Creatures that are not subject to critical hits, as well as creatures whose vital areas are out of the samurai's reach, do not take extra damage from a Focused Strike, but the bonus to the attack roll still applies.

The bonuses to the attack and damage rolls improves to +4 at 5th level, and increases by +2 for every 5 levels after (+6 at 10th level, +8 at 15th level, etc.) to a maximum of +10 at 20th level.

**Staretdown (Ex):** Beginning at 1st level, a samurai gains a +4 bonus to all Intimidate checks made to demoralize an opponent (see the Intimidate skill description in Core Rulebook I)

At 9th level, the samurai may demoralize all opponents within 30 feet, with a single Intimidate check as a standard action. The samurai need not threaten his opponents to demoralize them, although he must be visible to them.

At 14th level, the samurai may demoralize all opponents within 30 feet with a single Intimidate check as above, but may do so as a move action.

**Combat Style (Ex):** At 2nd level, a samurai selects one of three combat styles to pursue: *kenjutsu*, *kyuba*, or *sodo*. This choice affects the character's class features, but does not restrict his selection of feats or special abilities in any way.

*Kenjutsu* ("sword methods") is a fighting style that focuses on using the katana. If a samurai chooses *kenjutsu* as his fighting style, he is treated as having the Cleave feat even if he does not have the normal prerequisite for that feat, but only while fighting with the katana.

*Kyuba* (short for *kyuba no machi*, or "way of the horse and bow") is a fighting style that focuses on mounted combat and archery. If a samurai chooses *kyuba* as his fighting style, he is treated as having the Mounted Archery feat even if he does not have the normal prerequisites for that feat.

*Sodo* ("way of the spear") is a fighting style that focuses on using polearms. If a samurai chooses *sodo* as his fighting style, he is treated as having the Improved Trip feat even if he does not have the normal prerequisite for that feat, but only when fighting with a polearm. A polearm is a longspear, naginata (glaive), ranseur, or yari (gisarme) for the purposes of this ability.

Unlike the Ranger class, a samurai retains the benefits of his combat style while wearing any kind of armor (but not while using a shield), and while carrying a Light or Medium load.

**Iaijutsu (Ex):** At 3rd level, the samurai gains the Quick Draw feat for free as a bonus feat.

**Fearless (Su):** Beginning at 4th level, a samurai is immune to all forms of fear (magical or otherwise.)

**Improved Combat Style (Ex):** At 6th level, a samurai's aptitude in his chosen combat style (*kenjutsu*, *kyuba*, or *sodo*) improves.

If he selected *kenjutsu* at 2nd level, he is treated as having the Great Cleave feat, but only when fighting with the katana. If he selected *kyuba*, he is treated as having the Ride-By Attack feat. If he selected *sodo*, he is treated as having the Spring Attack feat, but only when fighting with a polearm. He gains this ability even if he does not meet the prerequisites for that particular feat.

As before, a samurai retains the benefits of his combat style while wearing any kind of armor (but not while using a shield), and while carrying a Light or Medium load.

**Damage Reduction (Ex):** At 7th level, a samurai gains Damage Reduction. Subtract 1 from the damage the samurai takes each time he is dealt damage from a weapon or a natural attack. At 10th level, and every three samurai levels thereafter (13th, 16th, and 19th level), this damage reduction increases by 1 point. Damage reduction can reduce damage to zero, but not below 0.

**Combat Style Mastery (Ex):** At 11th level, a samurai's aptitude in his chosen combat style (*kenjutsu*, *kyuba*, or *sodo*) improves again.

If the samurai chose *kenjutsu* as his combat style, he is treated as having the Improved Critical [Swords] feat, but only while fighting with a katana. If the samurai chose *kyuba* as his combat style, he is treated as having the Spirited Charge feat. If the samurai chose *sodo* as his combat style, he is treated as having the Whirlwind Attack feat, but only when fighting with a polearm. He gains these abilities even if he does not meet the normal prerequisites for these feats.

As before, a samurai retains the benefits of his combat style while wearing any kind of armor.

**Perfect Strike (Ex):** Once per day, the samurai may declare any successful melee attack to be an automatic threat for a critical hit. This threat for a critical hit is then confirmed normally. Magic items and effects that are triggered by critical hits (such as *icy burst* or *vorpal* weapons) do not function with this ability, although the weapon still scores critical damage if confirmed.

**Crippling Strike (Ex):** Once per day, the samurai may use his Focused Strike ability to deal a powerful blow that drains his foe's strength. The samurai must state that he wishes to use this ability before making the attack roll (thus, a failed attack ruins the attempt). If the Focused Strike is successful and the attack hits, his opponent takes damage as normal

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and also suffers 1d10 points of temporary Strength damage.

Lost strength returns at the rate of 1 point per hour. This ability cannot reduce an opponent's strength score below 1, and creatures with no strength scores (such as incorporeal creatures) are not affected by this ability.

**Combat Style Perfection (Ex):** At 17th level, the samurai has become the unequalled master of his chosen combat style (*kenjutsu*, *kyuba*, or *sodo*).

If the samurai chose *kenjutsu* as his combat style, he gains the Supreme Cleave ability. This ability allows the samurai to take a single five-foot step between cleave attacks while using his Greater Cleave ability. These five-foot steps count towards the samurai's allowable movement for the round. As with all *kenjutsu* abilities, the Mighty Cleave may only be used when the samurai is fighting with the katana.

If the samurai chose *kyuba* as his combat style, his mounted archery achieves perfection, allowing him to make ranged attacks while mounted as well as he can when standing on the ground. The samurai no longer suffers any penalties for ranged attacks made from the back of a mount moving at its normal speed, and takes only a -2 penalty to ranged attacks made from the back of a running (or charging) mount.

If the samurai chose *sodo* as his combat style, he gains the Lunging Strike ability. This ability allows the samurai to attack adjacent foes as well as foes who are 10 feet away when fighting with a polearm. As with all *sodo* abilities, the Lunging Strike may only be used when the samurai is fighting with a longspear, naginata (glaive), ranseur, or yari (gisarme).

A samurai retains the benefits of his combat style while wearing any kind of armor.

**Deadly Strike (Ex):** Once per day, the samurai may use his Focused Strike ability to slay an opponent in a single blow. The samurai must state that he wishes to use this ability before making the Focused Strike (thus, a failed Concentration check or a failed attack roll ruins the attempt.) If the Focused Strike is successful, the opponent takes damage as normal and must make a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + 1/2 samurai level + samurai's Wisdom modifier) or die from massive damage.

**Multiclassing Note:** Like a member of any other class, a samurai may be a multiclass character, but multiclass samurai face a special restriction. A samurai who gains a level of a new class, or (if already multiclass) gains a level in a previous class, may never again raise his samurai level. Such samurai may continue to serve honorably, and they retain all of their current abilities...they just cannot advance their samurai training any further.

**Ex-Samurai (Ronin):** A samurai who grossly violates the code of *bushido*, who ceases to be lawful good in alignment, or is released from service by his lord (often when the samurai's lord dies or is removed from power) cannot continue to gain levels as a samurai. Such samurai are known as *ronin*.

Ronin retain all class abilities of his samurai class, but cannot gain further levels as a samurai until he has properly atoned for his misdeeds and/or sworn allegiance to another lord. Due to the nature of his offense or release, this could be as simple as a public apology, or as dire as ritualistic suicide. Ronin are able to advance in levels of other classes (becoming multiclass characters), but if they choose to do so, they may never again return to the path of samurai (see Multiclassing Note, above.)