

PLAYER Paraphernalia



OLD SCHOOL SAMURAI
(NEW SAMURAI ARCHETYPE)

#24

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PLAYER PARAPHERNALIA #24

By the Knotty-Works



Welcome to the twenty-fourth issue of Player Paraphernalia, a hodge podge of character ideas and alternate rules that may be used with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game (Paizo, Inc®). This issue introduces a new samurai archetype, the Old School Samurai. Designed loosely on the original samurai class found in the progenitor 1st edition RPG, the Old School Samurai is the penultimate honor bound oriental combat lord.

Old School Samurai (Archetype)

Honor in service to his daimyo, the samurai is groomed from birth as both a swordsman and honor bound loyal retainer. It is not sufficient to just master his weapons, the samurai seeks to excel in all aspects of his life including several types of arts including calligraphy and poetry. The samurai seeks perfection in honor and loyalty both in himself, his household, allies, and retainers.

It is only through this perfection in both thought and deed that drives the samurai's actions and goals best defined by the code of bushido. Although fighting skills are rigorously practiced and infused in the very soul of this swordsman, the samurai seeks to employ the principles of bushido in every aspect of his life. To be samurai is to be the very embodiment of selfless honor and loyalty.

Class Abilities

Class Skills: The old school samurai adds **Perception** to his list of class skills. In addition, the old school samurai gains a +1 bonus per five class levels to his **perception** checks involving possible surprise attacks while the old school samurai is conscious and vigilant.

The old school samurai must have at least one **Craft** or **Perform** skill with a number of ranks equal to his class level.

Weapons and Armor Proficiency: The old school samurai is proficient with all simple and martial weapon, the katana and wakizashi. The samurai will only use weapons associated with peasants, thieves, thugs, and assassins as a last resort; including blow guns, clubs, crossbows (any type), dart, garrote, great club, net, saps, shuriken, slings, and whips. The samurai suffers a -2 penalty to all charisma based skill and ability checks while wielding such a weapon.

The old school samurai is proficient with light, medium, and heavy armors but not with shields. The samurai prefer heavy armor over medium or light armor, especially eastern armors including the **O-yoroi** or **Kusari gusoku**. If given the choice between a battered set of **O-yoroi** or a magical **Do-maru**, the old school samurai would choose the **O-yoroi**. If the samurai dons armor normally associated with peasants, thieves, thugs, or assassins; including leather, padded, or studded leather armor; he suffers a -2 penalty to all charisma based ability and skill checks. This penalty stacks with the penalty for wielding commoner weapons as well (see above).

Ki Shout (Ex): The samurai may give forth a great shout as a swift action at 1st level that grants him a +4 bonus to his Strength score for one round. The Samurai may do this a number of times per day equal to half his class level (minimum of 1 time at 1st level). The samurai must be able to vocalize his shout, i.e. it will not work if the shout cannot be heard by anyone including the samurai.

At 4th level, the samurai may use this ability as an immediate action and use the +4 bonus for any fear based saving throws instead of the Strength bonus.

At 8th level this effect carries over to all allies within 30 feet of the samurai that can hear the shout, granting them the same bonus to their Strength score until the beginning of the samurai's next turn.



At 12th level the samurai may choose to instead demoralize living opponents within 30 feet that can hear the shout. Opponents with less hit dice than the samurai's class level must make a Will save or become **frightened** for a round. The Will DC is 10 + half the samurai's class level + his Charisma modifier and if the opponent successfully makes the saving throw he is still shaken for one round. Opponents with more hit dice than the samurai's class level are not affected by this ability. Other samurai may add half their class level to the saving throw against this effect.

At 16th level the samurai may use his shout to physically bull rush any opponent within 10 feet of the samurai as a standard action. This effect is handled as a normal bull rush but does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

This ability replaces the samurai's **Resolve**, **Greater Resolve**, **Honorable Stand**, and **True Resolve** class abilities.

The Way of the Sword (Ex): The samurai gains both **Weapon Focus** and **Quick Draw** with the Katana at 1st level, he then gains **Weapon Specialization** with the Katana at 2nd level. The samurai also trains with the wakizashi, gaining **Weapon Focus** at 3rd level, **Quick Draw** at 4th level, and **Weapon Specialization** at 5th level. The samurai gains **Greater Weapon Focus** with the katana at 8th level and the wakizashi at 10th level. He gains **Greater Weapon Specialization** with the katana at 12th level and wakizashi at 14th level. The samurai does not need to meet the fighter pre-requisite for weapon specialization for either the katana or wakizashi. Note that the effects of the Quick Draw feat are not normally limited to specific or chosen weapons, but the Samurai only gains the effect of the feat with the katana and wakazashi; though the samurai may choose the feat normally to gain the effect for all other weapons (though this does not alter the effects for the katana or wakazashi).

This ability replaces the samurai's **Challenge**, **Weapon Expertise**, and **Demanding Challenge** class abilities. The samurai loses the challenge bonus normally granted by his chosen order.

The Way of the Bow (Ex): The samurai may choose from the following feats as bonus feats at 4th level and every four levels thereafter: **Clustered Shots**, **Deadly Aim**, **Far Shot**, **Focused Shot**, **Greater Snap Shot**, **Impact Critical Shot**, **Improved Precise Shot**, **Improved Snap Shot**,



Manyshot, **Mounted Archery**, **Point Blank Shot**, **Precise Shot**, **Rapid Shot**, **Shot on the Run**, **Snap Shot**, and **Weapon Focus** (Long Bow only). The samurai must meet any pre-requisites for the feats listed above and treats his samurai class levels as fighter class levels for those feats that have that requirement. The only exception is Mounted Archery, the samurai does not need to possess Mounted Combat.

This ability replaces the samurai's **Mounted Archer** and **Bonus Feat** class abilities.

Final Notes and Rationale

The samurai's challenge ability is one of the his greatest asset. So replacing it with specific feat trees for two specific weapons seems a bit counter intuitive. However, the challenge is very limited both in scope and use with a very limited number of uses per day and limited to one specific target. The bonuses granted by the way of the sword are not limited either in number of daily uses or opponents with which the bonuses may be applied.

The ki shout ability is probably the old school samurai's greatest feature, easily replacing the samurai's resolve features and easily over shadowing the bonuses it is replacing. However, the effects are only gradually granted as the samurai gains levels, and many of the more powerful effects are only granted at higher levels.

The way of the bow is probably the closest conversion in regards to power for the abilities being replaced. Essentially it grants bonus feats that are much more limited in nature than the normal bonus feats gained by the samurai, though gained at a slightly faster rate of progression.

Overall, the old school samurai is very comparable to the original Pathfinder class, but the abilities were tailored from the original samurai class found in the grand father of the fantasy role playing game.



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