

Eastern Expeditions

THE SAMURAI



A warrior class reimagined for 0e games

By Joseph D. Salvador



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The samurai warrior has captured the role-player's imagination since the earliest days of the original fantasy game. In fact, samurai appear in *Chainmail 3rd Edition* (TSR, p.21, 1975) as elite footmen with superior morale and a long bow useable from horseback. The first version of the samurai class appeared in the third issue of *The Dragon* magazine in 1976 (Childers, Mike & Jeff Kay. "Samurai," *The Dragon*, October 1976, p. 25) only two years after the release of the original boxed set. This interpretation focused primarily on technical aspects of samurai weaponry and armor.

A second version appearing in *Dragon* #49 (Salva, Anthony. "The Samurai, an Honorable NPC," *Dragon*, May 1981), was an amalgamation of disparate skills – illusionist spells, psionics, special weapons, and a number of martial arts maneuvers drawn from karate and/or tae kwon do. Both of these classes were described as "NPC classes," as they were considered too powerful for typical play. This new interpretation hopes to correct historical inaccuracies and to offer a class principally for player use.

With thanks to Simon J. Bull for his guidance and invaluable in-put,
and to Corey Ryan Walden for his thoughts and critique.

For followers of the original fantasy role-playing game and suitable for use with
Delving Deeper and other 0e games.

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THE SAMURAI

The warrior samurai occupied one of highest positions in the caste system of medieval Japan. They were officials, landholders, soldiers, and protectors of society. In game terms the samurai character class is similar to the fighter with a focus on particular weaponry and a number of additional benefits.

Table 1: Samurai Progression

Samurai Level	Experience Points Required	Hit Dice	Saving Throw Versus				
			Poison	Wands Rays	Paralysis Petrification	Breath Weapon	Spells
1	0	1+2	12	13	14	15	16
2	2,000	2+1	12	13	14	15	16
3	4,000	3	10	11	12	15	14
4	8,000	4	10	11	12	12	14
5	16,000	5	10	11	12	12	14
6	32,000	6	10	9	10	12	12
7	65,000	7	8	9	10	12	12
8	130,000	8+1	8	9	10	9	12
9	240,000	9+2	8	7	8	9	10
10	360,000	10	6	7	8	9	10
11	480,000	10+2	6	7	8	9	10
12	600,000	11	4	5	6	6	8

A Samurai requires 240,000 experience points per level beyond the 12th.

A Samurai adds one hit die per two levels beyond the 11th.

Samurai are expected to be versed in both military and artistic pursuits, so they have no prime requisite. Samurai must be of the Lawful alignment and any samurai who changes alignment during his career becomes a *ronin* and will suffer certain hindrances (see below).

Samurai may use armor and helmets, but not shields. However, a samurai's armor must reflect his status; it cannot be anything that is used, dirty, poor quality, or even of foreign design. A samurai's suit of armor must be valued at least 100 gp for each level he has achieved (i.e., a 4th-level samurai will not tolerate any armor worth less than 400 gp).

Samurai attack as clerics with the battle axe, dagger, hand axe, morning star, pole arm, short sword, spear, staff, sword, and two-handed sword, as well as the following new weapons – the *bokken*, *jitte*, *kodachi*, *kusari-gama*, and *tessen*. Samurai primarily employ the *katana*, *daikeyu* (longbow), and *wakizashi* (short sword), attacking as fighters and gaining a number of benefits with these (see below). Other weapons are considered foreign or dishonorable and are not usable by samurai.

Samurai train in the warrior arts from early childhood, learning the skills of swordsmanship, archery, horsemanship, and swimming, as well as courtly etiquette. Samurai receive **special weapon training** with their paired swords (the *katana* and the

wakizashi) and with the *daikyu*, having the following benefits when employing these weapons:

- Samurai are famous horse archers and receive no penalties when firing the *daikyu* from a mounted position.
- Samurai can draw the *katana* or *wakizashi* in an instant, requiring no action and receiving no penalty to initiative.
- Samurai may use the *katana* as a two-handed weapon or in a single hand.
- Regardless of dexterity score, a samurai may wield the *katana* and *wakizashi* as a pair, one in each hand, as would a fighter.
- When wielding the *katana* two-handed, the samurai rolls two dice for damage and keeps the higher result. In the case of tied dice, both dice are kept and summed for the damage result.

Samurai are trained in a special form of unarmed combat called **jujutsu** and consequently throw one additional die when attempting to overbear.

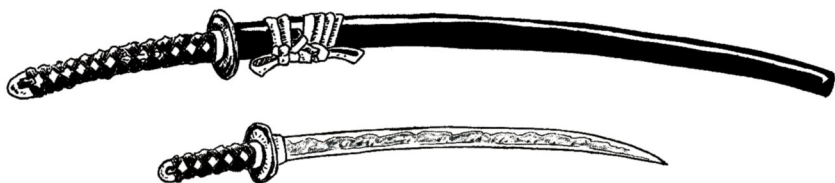
Upon achieving 4th level, samurai become **immune to fear**, both magical and mundane. However, samurai are terrifying warriors and can **cause fear** in lesser foes. Normal man-types must immediately check morale when attacked by a samurai of 4th-level (and above).

At 9th level, the samurai is granted a land holding by his lord or is allowed to conquer new lands and establish his own domain. If kept free of marauders and monsters, the domain will draw settlers and soldiers who will each pay 1 gp in taxes per month.

Samurai may employ any magic items available to fighters, excepting crossbows and bolts. They may only wield magic swords in the form of *katana*, *kodachi*, *wakizashi*, or the *odachi* (curved two-handed sword).

Samurai are expected serve a daimyo or other lord and to follow this lord's orders – failure to do so will result in severe repercussions. Additionally, samurai must follow the code of the warrior, *bushido*. The primary principles of *bushido* include:

- Duty and loyalty to the lord unto death.
- A samurai must conduct himself with honor and maintain proper manners and appearance.
- To best serve the lord, a samurai must train in the military arts.
- To best represent himself and his lord, a samurai must cultivate the classical arts – scholarship, painting, and music.
- A samurai must exhibit discipline and fortitude in all things.



RONIN

In Japanese society the term ronin refers to masterless samurai who have lost their position in the clan by being disgraced by their own misdeeds, by their clan being dispossessed of its holdings (due to war or law), or by losing their lord in battle. These men often become vagrant mercenaries or criminals, although others hold to their ideals and perhaps become monks, teachers, or martial instructors.

In game terms, a ronin is any samurai character who is dismissed from service or otherwise loses his position in the clan, as described above. A samurai may also become a ronin if he ever changes from the Lawful alignment (although this will not always result in immediate dismissal). Becoming a ronin is a great dishonor, and many samurai choose to commit seppuku (ritual suicide) rather than live in disgrace. A ronin may not establish a land holding and suffers the following disadvantages:

- Ronin take a 20% penalty to all experience points earned.
- They may never take on hirelings or acquire retainers.
- Anyone who is aware of his status will be disdainful of the ronin, causing a -2 penalty to reaction checks.
- Finally, the ronin is banished from his lord's domain and is proclaimed an enemy of the clan. He is considered an outlaw and a criminal and will be hunted down if ever he passes through the domain. Depending on the lord's status, allied lords may also bar the ronin from their territories.



JAPANESE ARMOR

Japanese armors are traditionally composed of leather and iron scales, intricately woven together with leather cord in the lamellar style. The scales are usually lacquered and the suits can be very colorful and artistic. Japanese armorers produced the equivalents of leather and mail armors but these were worn differently from Western types.

Nerigawa gusoku: This armor is made from hardened leather scales attached to

Table 2: Armor

Item	AC	Cost	Weight
Unarmored	9	-	-
Nerigawa gusoku	7	10 gp	25 lb.
Kusari gusoku	5	45 gp	50 lb.
Ö-yoroi	3	100 gp	75 lb.
Shield	*	15 gp	15 lb.
Helmet, jingasa	-	4 gp	3 lb.
Helmet, kabuto	-	10 gp	5 lb.

* Adjusts armor class by -1.



a cloth backing. Nerigawa includes a cuirass (*dō*), from which tassets hang, and armored sleeves (*kote*).

Kusari gusoku: The Japanese version of mail, kusari gusoku consists of mail sewn to a sturdy cloth jacket (*kusari katabira*), thigh protectors (*baidate*), and greeves (*sune-ate*). The armor also includes short sleeves of mail.

Ō-yoroi: The classic Japanese armor, *ō-yoroi* is a full suit of lamellar armor, including protection for the chest, shoulders, arms, thighs, and shins. This armor includes a *kabuto* helmet.

Shield: Rarely seen in Japan, shields were typically only employed during siege warfare or from emplacements and required two hands to move.

Helmet, jingasa: An iron or hardened leather version of the peasant's conical hat, the *jingasa* is employed by foot soldiers and the armed peasantry.

Helmet, kabuto: The classic samurai helmet, the *kabuto* has an iron helmet-bowl, a large, banded neck guard, and often includes crests and styling to identify the wearer.

SUPPLEMENTAL ARMOR AND IMPROVEMENTS

Armor marks the status and power of noble samurai and other wealthy warriors, most of whom go to great expense to customize their armor. Armorers, smiths, engravers, painters, and other craftsmen might be hired to create armors that are highly artistic. The improvements below can be added to any armor, though the referee may limit which might be applied to leather or chain armor. Consult Table 3 for costs; multipliers are usually applied to the base cost of the armor although the referee is the final arbiter in determining cost, altering it based on materials, craftsmanship, etc.

Artistic Lacquering: The standard lacquer is replaced by a more artistic, and often more colorful, lacquer design. It may be simple bands or geometric patterns of color, or a more intricate design.

Embossing: Some of the armor plates are formed with either raised or recessed images or designs.

Gilding: Areas of the armor, such as the trim, helmet, or *dō*, are ornately gilded in gold or silver (called **silvering** in this case).

Horo: A square, cloth cloak attached to the back of a cuirass and meant to balloon out when riding a horse at speed. The horo helps protect against arrows shot at the back. When hit by such an attack, the wearer is allowed a save versus wands to avoid the damage.

Jirushi: The jirushi is a small flag of paper or cloth worn on the helmet or shoulder that identifies the wearer.

Kogake: A split-toed, leather shoe with an armored covering of plate or chain mail that protects the top of the foot. *Kogake* might be worn alone or with sandals.

Kegutsu: Short leather shoes that are trimmed in silk and bear fur and worn for ornamentation.

Nodowa: An armored cloth neck guard, the *nodowa* might be worn alone or attached to the bottom of a face guard.

Painting: Parts of the armor, usually the *dō*, *sode*, and *sune-ate*, are covered with tight silk and painted with beautiful scenes.

Sashimono: A large identification flag of silk or paper that is held in a bamboo frame and affixed to the back.

Silk Backing: The normal cloth or deerskin backing of the armor is replaced with heavy, layered silk.

Silk Cord Weave: The cloth or leather cord that binds the armor scales together is replaced with silk cord, often in vibrant, multi-colored patters.

STYLES

Over time different styles of Japanese armors developed, mostly based on new weapon technology, but sometimes to allow for more utilitarian uses or simply as a fashion concern.

Kiritsuke Kosane Gusoku: Armor made in this style utilizes long bands of iron or hardened leather (called *lames*) to create a suit of lamemar armor.

Tatami Gusoku: This “folding armor” is made to collapse into itself, even the helmet folds into a small, portable size. Usually, armor in this style is primarily chain mail with

Table 3: Armor Improvements	
Item	Cost
Artistic Lacquering	+50%
Embossing	+100%
Gilding	+200%
Horo	+5 gp
Jirushi	+5 gp
Kiritsuke Kosane Gusoku	+75%
Kogake	+10 gp
Kegutsu	+10 gp
Nodowa	+15 gp
Painting	+100%
Sashimono	+15 gp
Silk Backing	+50%
Silk Cord Weave	+50%
Silvering	+150%
Special Styling	+200%
Tatmi Gusoku	+100%
Tōsei Gusoku	+150%

iron or leather plates attached.

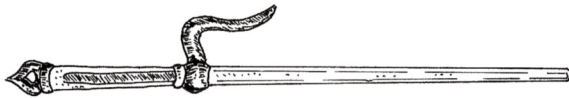
Tōsei Gusoku: Armor made in the "modern" style, *tōsei gusoku* did not appear until the 16th century and utilized elements of European design, such as ridged helmet bowls and steel breastplates. Some of these armors were even made to be bullet proof.

Special Styling: Armors were sometimes made to resemble animals, demons, tengu, or the like. Others might imitate a courtier's apparel or monk's clothing, or armor covered in bear fur and made to resemble a gorilla.

JAPANESE WEAPONS

Japanese warriors employ many of the standard weapons found throughout the world. These are listed below with the Japanese terminology. Those marked with an (*) are described under "New Weapons."

Battle axe (<i>ono</i>)	Pole arm (<i>bisentō</i> , <i>naginata</i> , <i>nagamaki</i>)
Club (<i>hanbō</i> , <i>tonfa</i> , <i>yavara</i>)	Short bow (<i>bankyū</i>)
Dagger (<i>tantō</i> , <i>kaiken</i> , <i>kozuka</i>)	Short sword (<i>wakizashi</i> , <i>kodachi</i> *)
Flail (<i>chigiriki</i> , <i>nunchaku</i>)	Spear (<i>yari</i>)
Hammer (<i>ōtsuchi</i>)	Staff (<i>bō</i> , <i>jō</i> *, <i>shakujo</i>)
Hand axe (<i>ono</i>)	Sword (<i>bokken</i> *, <i>katana</i> *, <i>tachi</i>)
Longbow (<i>daikyū</i> *)	Two-handed sword (<i>ōdachi</i>)
Morning star (<i>tetsubo</i> , <i>kanabō</i>)	



NEW WEAPONS

Bokken: A wooden sword in the shape of a katana or *wakizashi*.

Daikyū: The Japanese longbow conforms to the statistics of the Western longbow. It must be noted, however, that the *daikyū* has an off-set handle, allowing it to be used from horseback.

Jitte: An iron truncheon with a single prong attached at the hand guard. The *jitte* is used as a bludgeon and parrying instrument.

Jō: A short wooden staff.

Katana: A long, curved sword with a single sharp edge. The katana must be wielded with two hands, except by certain classes.

Kodachi: A short-bladed katana that retains

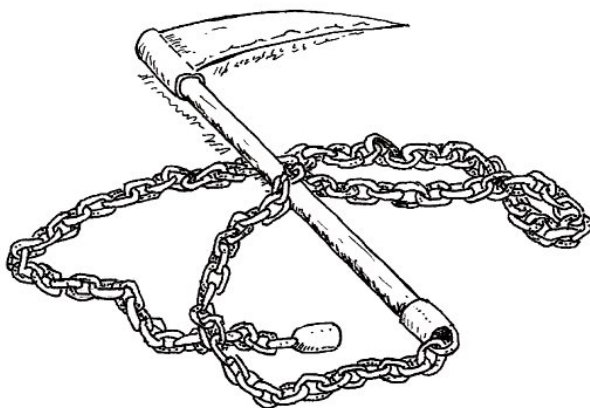
Table 4: Weapons

Item	Cost	Weight
Bokken	3 gp	3 lb.
Daikyū	50 gp	5 lb.
Jitte	6 gp	3 lb.
Jō	2 gp	3 lb.
Katana	75 gp	10 lb.
Kodachi	20 gp	5 lb.
Kusari-gama	10 gp	10 lb.
Tessen	7 gp	2 lb.

the long handle, allowing it to be used two-handed.

Kusari-gama: A short-hafted sickle (*kama*) with a length of chain attached to one end. The metal weight at the end of the chain is swung and used to entangle an opponent's limbs or weapon.

Tessen: A folding iron fan commonly used by commanders. It can be used as a bludgeon or to parry attacks. Other types include the *gunbai* (a solid open fan) and the *gunsen* (a folding fan of lesser quality used by average soldiers).



OPTIONAL RULE

Two-Weapon Fighting: Characters with a Dexterity of 13 or greater may choose to fight with a weapon in each hand. Both weapons must be single-handed weapons. One weapon must be designated as the primary weapon and may weigh up to 10 pounds. If the primary weapon weighs more than 5 pounds, the secondary weapon must weigh less than the primary weapon. Two-weapon Fighting grants the character a +1 bonus to hit. Fighters and thieves may instead choose to cause an opponent to suffer a -1 attack penalty, though this cannot be used in conjunction with parrying. Furthermore, a throw of an even number on the attack roll indicates that the right-hand weapon strikes, while an odd number indicates that the left-hand weapon has hit.

It should be noted that the character employing two weapons simultaneously is less likely to be disarmed when parrying and may be allowed to counterattack with either weapon (or both), subject to the referee's judgment.

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