## A Necromancer's Grimoire The Book of Martial Action

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# The Book of Martial Action



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## The Five Disciplines of Martial Action



The Flowing River discipline emphasizes grace, speed, and mobility in combat. It teaches that no matter how strong your opponent is, if you dodge each of his blows, he will never defeat you, and that no matter how great your foe's defenses might be, if you can strike where he does not expect you, you will prevail. In life, followers of the Flowing River remain ever-moving, as they travel on the spiritual journey known as life.

The Golden Soul discipline teaches that inner harmony and self knowledge are the keys to victory, and that if you truly know yourself, you will be undefeatable. Their style is well-balanced in many ways, and focuses on using the flow of battle to empower themselves, but this only works if they know their own limits. Followers of the golden soul tend to be calm and serene outside of combat, and the discipline heavily stresses meditative techniques.





The Graceful Swallow discipline is a showy, flashy fighting style designed to make the user look impressive as he uses it, though it is no less effective for doing so. The style involves many grand flourishes and flashy techniques like disarming and tripping foes. Sometimes referred to as the "Merciful Swallow," because of its ability to defeat opponents without slaying them, it is popular amongst youths and nobility.

The Infinite Shadow discipline teaches that combat is a deadly, highstakes situation, and that every possible advantage should be taken that your foe is the one who winds up dead, and not you. This ruthless fighting style is banned in many places, and teaches its users to take advantage of foes' vulnerabilities in order to deliver swift, decisive, and efficient killing blows. It is a favorite of assassins, but also has a traditional background.





The Iron Ram discipline is a heavy and brutal fighting style that is used for dueling. Its techniques are incredibly well-suited for one-on-one combat, and in such situations it is all but unbeatable, but it suffers heavily when used against multiple opponents. Many of the style's techniques allow the user to prevent his foe from escaping or attacking elsewhere, while at the same time providing the user with ample advantages against his single opponent.

#### Introduction

Much is said about the rift between spellcasters and so-called "martial" classes such as fighters and barbarians. To some, the main difference is raw power, and this can certainly be true. But a greater problem, we feel, is a difference in choices: while a high-level wizard or cleric literally has dozens of prepared spells to choose from at any given moment, and hundreds of potential spells to prepare each day, fighters tend to choose between full-attacking and charging, with combat maneuvers typically being a distant afterthought (and typically dismissed as being too much hassle).

Some time ago, we proposed a solution to this problem, with *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book* of Martial Action. Inspired in part by books that had come before it, we took the approach of giving martial characters (and, to some extent, all characters) access to special actions that they could perform, to liven up combat. The book was a resounding success, but naturally, we weren't satisfied. After all, how many books of new spells come out for spellcasters each year? Several are put out by Necromancers of the Northwest alone! So, naturally, we decided it was high time to give adherents of martial action even more choices.

Rather than just churn out another collection of feats, however, we decided that we wanted to inject a little more flavor and identity into this installment. In the previous book, we were careful to avoid getting carried away flavorfully, and wanted to lay a groundwork for martial action techniques that would fit seamlessly into any campaign setting. This time, though, we wanted to have different schools or styles of combat, each of which would promote a different style of play.

Of course, we also wanted the book to be usable for anyone and everyone. If you haven't got a copy of *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action*, don't worry: everything you need to get started is in this book (you may want to start with the appendix, in the back, that contains all the ground rules for techniques and martial action points). If you have the previous book and are worried that you won't be able to make use of the new content, never fear: though the feats in this book are thematically tied to different flavorful schools, you can dive right into them at any point, even if your character is already high level. And while many techniques reward you for investing heavily in a particular discipline, you're also free to mix-and-match and create your own unique combat style, as well.



#### Classes

The following section presents five new base classes, each of which is associated with one of the five martial disciplines included in this book (Flowing River, Golden Soul, Graceful Swallow, Infinite Shadow, and Iron Ram). The classes are presented in alphabetical order.

#### Golden Soul Acolyte

So you have come to learn the ways of the golden soul, have you? The training is not easy; one must master not only the techniques of the body, but also achieve true harmony of the mind and spirit. Through meditation and focus, you will learn to unlock your inner potential and become much more than a mere warrior.

#### ~Guon Shi, Disciple of the Golden Soul

Golden soul acolytes are warriors and spiritualists who have devoted themselves to the achievement of enlightenment through martial skill. They are accomplished fighters in every regard, but also concern themselves with matters of the soul, looking to further their path to personal perfection by exploring all aspects of mortal existence.

Unlike traditional martial artists, the golden soul acolyte is chiefly concerned with personal perfection and attaining his ultimate state, rather than on merely mastering the best ways to slay his foes. A golden soul acolyte practices a number of potent meditative techniques that allow him to tap his inner power to achieve superhuman feats. The core skills of the golden soul acolyte focus on personal protection, healing, and empowerment, working in tandem with complementary martial techniques which produce deadly and extremely resilient fighters.

#### Making a Golden Soul Acolyte

In some respects, a golden soul acolyte is very similar to a fighter. He needs to be strong and healthy in order to live a fulfilling existence, and his primary role in any party is likely to be combat-related. However, a golden soul acolyte also has a lot in common with the typical monk, placing a great deal of emphasis on meditation, athletics, and quasi-magical powers. Golden soul acolytes fulfill both roles well, though not as well as the more specialized classes can.

Abilities: As martial artists, the golden soul acolyte's primary role in any group is melee combat; as such, a high Strength score is of chief importance to golden soul acolytes who need to be able to hit reliably and do exceptional damage. Unlike monks, golden soul acolytes are capable of wearing the very heaviest of armor, and often do so while training. Because of this, they rely less on Dexterity to avoid being hit in combat. A high Constitution score is less important to golden soul acolytes than to other characters. While they do need a high Constitution score to provide additional hit points and a high Fortitude saving throw, the more powerful a golden soul acolyte becomes, the less he needs such things in abundance, as he gains the ability to heal his own damage and cure certain adverse conditions. A high Intelligence score is important to golden soul acolytes who intend to take Combat Expertise and related feats, as well as those who wish to supplement the low skill point total they normally receive. A golden soul acolyte does well to be wise, as a high Wisdom score grants him additional martial action points and influences some of his other class features. Like many martially-oriented characters, he is particularly exposed to harm from mental domination spells. When they aren't busy fighting, golden soul acolytes spend much of their time keeping to themselves or in cloistered monasteries, and thus a high Charisma is rarely a chief concern.

Alignment: A golden soul acolyte can be of any non-chaotic alignment. The path of the golden soul is a difficult one, requiring strict discipline and a commitment to finding harmony and balance within oneself. Most followers of the golden soul are lawful neutral or true neutral, depending on whether the golden soul acolyte chooses to focus more on achieving perfect discipline or perfect harmony, though members of other alignments are far from unheard of. The way of the golden soul does not believe in good and evil, and instead focuses on the actions of individuals and their emotions, believing that by bringing all together they can find balance and

#### Table 1-1: The Golden Soul Acolyte

Table I-I	. The Golden So	1			
	Base Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+2	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+3	Golden soul style
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+3	Soul's awakening
4th	+4	+4	+1	+4	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+4	Golden mastery 1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+5	Golden body
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+5	Meditations of the soul
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+6	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+6	The healing soul
ıoth	+10/+5	+7	+3	+7	Golden mastery 2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+7	Enlightenment of the soul
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+8	Bonus feat
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+8	Golden recovery
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+9	Protection of the soul
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+9	Golden mastery 3
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+10	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+10	Soul's emergance
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+11	Swift meditation
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+11	Soul's ascension
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+12	Bonus feat , golden mastery 4

achieve perfection, an ideal which appeals to both good and evil individuals.

**HD:** d10.

#### **Class Skills**

The golden soul acolyte's class skills are Acrobatics (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (history) (Int), Knowledge (nobility) (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Stealth (Dex), and Swim (Str).

Skill Ranks Per Level: 2+ Intelligence modifier.

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the golden soul acolyte.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Golden soul acolytes are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, as well as with the kama, nunchaku, siangham, and shuriken, and with all types of armor (heavy, light, and medium) and shields, but not tower shields. **Bonus Feat:** Golden soul acolytes are practiced in the ways of the golden soul. At 1st level, the golden soul acolyte gains the Combat Artist feat, as well as either the Gilt Swing feat or the Golden Focus feat as bonus feats. At 4th level, and every four levels thereafter, the golden soul acolyte receives a new golden soul technique feat as a bonus feat. He must still meet all prerequisites necessary to gain the chosen feat.

Golden Soul Style (Ex): As experts in the golden soul style, golden soul acolytes are better at using the school's techniques and stances than their peers. Beginning at 2nd level, the golden soul acolyte is treated as though he had more golden soul technique feats than he actually possesses for the purposes of feats and abilities that rely on the number of golden soul technique feats he possesses. For every two golden soul technique feats the golden soul acolyte possesses, he is treated as though he possesses one more golden soul technique feat for the purposes of such feats and abilities.

**Soul's Awakening (Ex):** As a golden soul acolyte continues to train in the ways of the golden soul, his soul is revitalized, allowing him to fuel his martial skill with his very spirit. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the number of martial action points a golden soul acolyte can have in his martial action point pool is increased by an amount equal to his Wisdom modifier.

**Golden Mastery (Ex):** As a golden soul acolyte's skill and expertise in the ways of the golden soul increase over time, he learns to use those skills with greater efficiency. Beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the golden soul acolyte uses a golden soul technique feat, he needs to spend 1 less martial action point to do so than he otherwise would. This cannot reduce the cost below 1 point. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the cost is decreased by an additional martial action point.

**Golden Body (Ex):** A golden soul acolyte learns secret meditative techniques which allow him to access his inner strength and greatly enhance his ability to perform certain tasks. Beginning at 6<sup>th</sup> level, the golden soul acolyte can spend any number of martial action points (up to his base attack bonus) as a swift action. For each martial action point spent this way, he gains a +2 competence bonus on all Strengthand Dexterity-based skill checks for a number of rounds equal to his Wisdom modifier.

**Meditations of the Soul (Ex):** A golden soul acolyte's intense focus on martial meditations allows him to recover his focus and strength at an alarming rate. Beginning at 7<sup>th</sup> level, as a standard action, a golden soul acolyte can recover a number of martial action points equal to 1/2 his class level, rounded down. He can use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1).

**The Healing Soul (Ex):** A golden soul acolyte can meditate and focus on his body in order to knit together his own skin, effectively healing himself at incredible speed. Beginning at 9<sup>th</sup> level, a golden soul acolyte can spend any number of martial action points as a move action; if he does, he recovers 2 hit points per martial action point spent this way.

**Enlightenment of the Soul (Ex):** As a golden soul acolyte's training progresses, he gains insight into his own abilities and can exercise more control over himself. Beginning at 11<sup>th</sup> level, the number of martial action points a golden soul acolyte can spend each round is increased by an amount equal to his Wisdom modifier.

**Golden Recovery (Ex):** A golden soul acolyte can spend a short time to meditate and cure himself of deadly ailments. Beginning at 13<sup>th</sup> level, as a fullround action the golden soul acolyte can spend 3 martial action points to cure himself of any of the following conditions: fatigued, sickened, shaken or staggered. By spending 5 points, he can cure himself of the blinded, dazed, deafened, or exhausted conditions, or cure himself of any diseases or poisons from which he is currently suffering. By spending 10 martial action points, he cures himself of all of the preceding conditions and ailments from which he might be suffering, and also recovers from the confused condition.

**Protection of the Soul (Ex):** A golden soul acolyte can focus on his soul in order to channel his inner power to protect himself against magic attacks. Beginning at 14<sup>th</sup> level, a golden soul acolyte can spend any number of martial action points as a swift action. If he does, he gains an amount of spell resistance equal to 5 + the number of points spent this way for a number of rounds equal to his Wisdom modifier (minimum 1).

**Soul's Emergence (Ex):** Near the end of his training, a golden soul acolyte learns to fully channel his inner self to empower his outer self. Beginning at 17<sup>th</sup> level, the golden soul acolyte chooses one of two benefits to gain. He can choose a defensive bonus, in which case he gains a dodge bonus to AC equal to his Wisdom modifier, as well as a competence bonus on all saving throws equal to his Wisdom modifier. Alternatively, he can gain an offensive bonus, in which case he gains a competency bonus on all attack rolls and weapon damage rolls equal to his Wisdom modifier.

**Swift Meditation (Ex):** Beginning at 18<sup>th</sup> level, a golden soul acolyte can use his meditations of the soul class features as a swift action, instead of a standard action.

**Soul's Ascension (Ex):** As a golden soul acolyte's training nears completion, he achieves a greater awareness of himself and his martial skill. Beginning at 19<sup>th</sup> level, a golden soul acolyte adds twice his Wisdom modifier to the number of martial action points he can have in his pool and spend each round, instead of adding his Wisdom modifier.

#### Playing a Golden Soul Acolyte

Golden soul acolytes are warriors who focus their entire beings on their journey towards personal perfection. They give everything they have in order to be the best at whatever they do and will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. Driven and highly disciplined, a golden soul acolyte is a very serious character who has little time for nonsense.

Golden soul acolytes view everything as an opportunity to improve and to reinforce their training. They view all tasks with the stoic and disciplined mind of a warrior monk. Their obsession with personal perfection makes them stern and difficult to get along with, though those that put in the time find that there are no more loyal or trustworthy allies.

Races: Like most high martial arts, the tradition of the golden soul stems from humanity, and it is most common for humans to walk the path of the golden soul acolyte. It is not particularly uncommon to find members of other races among the golden soul's ranks, however. Dwarves in particular find that they excel as golden soul acolytes due to their natural inclinations towards wisdom, contemplation and defense. Elves find that the golden soul offers a very civilized approach to martial combat, and many leave the venerable martial traditions of their own people hoping to achieve closeness with their gods and ancestors as they travel the path of the enlightened sword. Half-elves or half-orcs join the order of the golden soul in order to find belonging or to find themselves along its mystical road. Halflings and gnomes rarely find the patience for the golden soul's slow, contemplative approach, and fighters of those races tend to prefer more adventurous and daring styles.

**Religion:** The golden soul is very much like a religion, though it has no gods to worship and does not restrict its members from practicing whatever faith they desire. The strict tenets and rigid philosophies of the golden soul provide a dogma of discipline and personal perfection that leaves little time for relationships with churches or deities. Rather, followers of the golden soul focus primarily on achieving their own personal enlightenment, and everything they do is in furtherance of that singular goal.



Other Classes: Golden soul acolytes get along well with monks and paladins chiefly because members of those classes share their intense appreciation for discipline, order, and martial skill. Many who follow the way of the golden soul belong to those classes, and so it is natural for them to fall in with golden soul acolytes. Golden soul acolytes care little for barbarians or what they view as mindless fighters, considering such so-called martial artists to be beneath them and detrimental to achieving their own goals. Similarly, golden soul acolytes often spurn the company of healers such as clerics and druids; since they can heal themselves, they believe that relying on such individuals makes them weak and therefore unworthy of walking the path they are on. Many golden soul acolytes recruit arcane spellcasters to expedite travel or otherwise deal with the mundane tasks of adventuring.

#### Golden Soul Acolytes in the World

Their methods are unusual, but in a way, the followers of the Golden Soul find their own kind of spiritual enlightenment. Though I suspect it is a lonely life without the comfort of devotion to one's gods, the results that members of such disciplines are able to find is undeniable, as is their fabled skill in battle.

#### ~Eridilis, Elven Cleric

Golden soul acolytes devote their lives to personal perfection. They spend most of their lives apart from the world, considering matters of their own mind, body and spirit, and learning to bring those forces into balance. As such, most have little time for the world at large and tend to view it mostly in contrast with themselves. A few golden soul acolytes disagree with this position and feel that a deep connection to the world is important to understanding themselves and achieving true enlightenment. Such individuals often become adventurers.

**Daily Life:** Golden soul acolytes adhere to a strict and rigid lifestyle, dominated by training and meditation. Most spend their lives in and around monasteries devoted to the ideals of personal enlightenment and martial training. In these monasteries, life is organized by the most skilled and experienced member, who does his best to train the others under him so that they may one day achieve their aims. Because training is left up to these masters, the experience varies wildly, and some followers of the golden soul spend their time traveling and seeking one who could prove to be their ultimate teacher.

Notables: The greatest of the golden soul masters still living is a woman named Nori Hazu, who runs a formal school for martial training in the distant Koziri Mountains. The school grounds cover much of the heavy jungle and remote mountains, and the students and their families are the only civilized people to inhabit the region. Nori Hazu herself claims to have come close to achieving enlightenment, and can boast that she has never been defeated in combat. Her most famous exploit, outside of those learned in the ways of the golden soul, is the defeat of the demon knight Sheribo and his army of ogres, which threatened her school nearly a decade ago. After she rallied her students to a firm defense, she personally slew Sheribo and led her students to victory over his ogres without suffering a single casualty.

The founder of the golden soul tradition and its greatest master was a man named Pi, who wandered the planes from parts unknown over 300 years ago.

Not quite human, Pi was a warrior of immense skill and artistry who was well along the path to what he called "ascension through the sword"—a philosophy still practiced within the order of the golden soul to this day—when he met a human swordsman who challenged him to a duel. That warrior was actually Fredrik Gerand, an accomplished swordsman of the then well-established iron ram school of martial combat. Fredrik ultimately won the duel, a fact which still incenses many of the golden soul to this day. Following the duel, Pi had a revelation about martial combat and in the space of three days created every technique known to the golden soul. Before his ascension, he taught his skills and philosophy to those warriors he had met in his travels who had proved themselves of sound mind and noble purpose, effectively founding the golden soul as we know them today.

**Organizations:** The golden soul is a loosely organized martial order, centered around local schools and monasteries devoted to the tradition. These local chapters are each run by a master who instructs the senior students, who instruct the junior students, who assess potential new members. Everything is arranged according to skill at the golden soul techniques and understanding of the philosophy behind them, which tends to vary slightly from master to master. One thing which rarely changes is that absolute obedience is expected to be given to your superiors.

The largest school currently in existence is run by Nori Hazu, and the school grounds and surrounding village (which is home to the families of students and to those who can profit off the school) cover nearly an entire mountain. The village and the school are both governed by Nori herself, who stresses that her students focus on the basics and that meditation and practice will reveal the more advanced secrets of the world in due time.

NPC Reactions: Golden soul acolytes are generally very poorly received by the rest of the world, who disapprove of their surly and selfimportant manners. Still, many seeking enlightenment, training or both flock to the golden soul in droves seeking to prove their own worth and reach those lofty goals. **Golden Soul Acolyte Lore:** Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research golden soul acolytes to learn more about them. When a character makes this skill check, read or paraphrase the information from the table below, including the entries for lower DCs.

#### **DC** Information

- 10 Golden soul acolytes are martial adepts who specialize in the golden soul school of combat.
- 15 Golden soul acolytes are monk-like fighters who focus on self-perfection.
- 20 Golden soul acolytes are better able to use techniques of the golden soul school and can do so more often than other characters.
- 25 In addition to being masters of golden soul techniques, golden soul acolytes can use their inner strength to power their attack, defenses, and even heal their wounds.
- 30 Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific golden soul acolytes, the areas in which they operate, the activities they undertake, and so on.

#### Iron Duelist

Foul creature, you will fight me! You cannot flee, and you cannot win. This shall be your final battle.

#### ~Julia Neurin, Iron Duelist

Iron duelists are the final authority on one-onone combat, obsessed with personal glory and gifted beyond compare in the art of the duel. They train from the moment they choose their profession in order to be the best at dueling, believing the duel to be the ultimate test of one's skills, with life awarded to the winner and death being the consequence for failure.

Iron duelists excel at single combat to such a degree as to preclude them from nearly any other combat role. All of their training focuses on fighting one foe at a time and rewards them for dedicating themselves to dispatching a single enemy, while hindering foes who choose to ignore them. The iron duelist is also a master of the iron ram school of martial combat, granting her enhanced access to that school's duel-focused techniques.

#### Making an Iron Duelist

An iron duelist is a true toe-to-toe warrior, with little room for being anything else. She focuses all her time and effort on defeating her enemies as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Iron duelists tend to focus on melee combat with only a light emphasis on ranged combat, as many of the iron ram school's specialized feats require being gifted in melee combat.

Ability Scores: Because many of the iron ram's specialized techniques involve the use of melee attacks, and because some of the iron duelist's special techniques require that she engage her foe face-toface, iron duelists favor Strength above all other ability scores, as it allows them to hit more often in melee combat and deal more damage. Dexterity is of limited importance to an iron duelist; while it does contribute to her AC, as well as to her CMD and ranged attacks, iron duelists focus less on these things and more on taking the fight directly to the enemy. Thus, although few iron duelists would neglect Dexterity, most do not feel a need to invest too much into it. A high Constitution is as important to the iron duelist as to any melee fighter, and the extra hit points are a welcome addition to her combat abilities, as she can expect to take the brunt of abuse from any foe she challenges. A high Wisdom is important for avoiding mental attacks, but most iron duelists would rather kill their foes before they can use those attacks at all, and while they would enjoy a high Wisdom, they don't particularly rely on it.

Alignment: Iron duelists can be of many different alignments, depending on what motivates the individual, and generally find that ethics has little to do with their profession. Lawful iron duelists laud trial by combat with complex and ritualistic features, while chaotic iron duelists favor picking fights whenever it pleases them and letting their blade do the talking. Good iron duelists are often champions of righteous causes who use their skills to further advance the goals of goodness. Evil iron duelists are sometimes champions of malevolence in this way, but are much more often inclined to duel purely for personal gain. **HD:** d10.

#### Table 1-2: The Iron Duelist

rabic	Base Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Iron ram style
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Iron offense +1
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Iron mastery 1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Iron defense
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Ram strike
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Iron offense +2
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Iron mastery 2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Brutal ram +3
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Bonus feat
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Improved ram strike
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Brutal ram +4
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Iron mastery 3, iron offense +3
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Brutal ram +5
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Iron critical
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Greater ram strike
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat , brutal ram +6, iron mastery 4

#### **Class Skills**

The iron duelist's class skills are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (engineering) (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Ranks Per Level: 2 + Intelligence modifier.

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the iron duelist.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Iron duelists are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all types of armor (heavy, light, and medium) and both shields, but not tower shields.

**Bonus Feat**: Iron duelists are particularly adept at the techniques of the iron ram school of martial combat. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, an iron duelist gains both the Combat Artist feat and either the Challenging Strike feat or the Heat the Anvil feat as bonus feats. Additionally, at 4<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, she gains an additional iron ram feat as a bonus feat. She must still meet all prerequisites necessary to gain the chosen feat.

**Iron Ram Style (Ex):** As experts in the iron ram style, iron duelists are better at using the school's techniques and stances than their peers. Beginning at 2nd level, the iron duelist is treated as though she had more iron ram technique feats than she actually possesses for the purposes of feats and abilities that rely on the number of iron ram technique feats she possesses. For every two iron ram technique feats the iron duelist possesses, she is treated as though she possesses one more iron ram technique feat for the purposes of such feats and abilities.

**Iron Offense (Ex):** An iron duelist focuses her efforts on fighting one opponent at a time, and as the battle progresses she learns her foe's movements, allowing her to better end the battle in her favor. Beginning at  $3^{rd}$  level, the iron duelist gains a +1 circumstance bonus on all attack rolls made against the target of the last attack she made since the beginning of her last turn. At 9<sup>th</sup> level, and again at 15<sup>th</sup> level, this bonus increases by an additional +1.

**Iron Mastery (Ex):** As an iron duelist continues to practice her techniques and skills, she learns to perform iron ram techniques more easily than other characters. Beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the iron duelist uses an iron ram technique feat, she needs to spend 1 less martial action point to do so than she otherwise would. This cannot reduce the cost below 1 point. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the cost is decreased by an additional martial action point.

the cost in martial action points to perform any iron ram technique is reduced by 1 (minimum 1). At  $10^{th}$ level, and every 5 levels thereafter, this discount increases by +1.

**Iron Defense (Ex):** An iron duelist is exceptional at defending herself against her chosen foes. Beginning at 6<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the iron duelist is attacked in melee by a creature who attacked her in the preceding round, she gains a dodge bonus to AC equal to 1/3 the number of iron ram technique feats she possesses (rounded down, minimum 1) against that attack.

Ram Strike (Ex): An iron duelist is able to strike with blinding speed against her least suspecting foes. Beginning at 7<sup>th</sup> level, the iron duelist can spend martial action points in order to make attacks of opportunity against foes that begin their turn within her threat range. Whenever a creature within her threat range performs an action which would provoke an attack of opportunity, the iron duelist can spend 3 martial action points in order to make an attack of opportunity against that target, even if she has already used all of her attacks of opportunity this round. She may even use this ability if the target possesses an ability which would normally allow him to not provoke an attack of opportunity, such as by making a trip attempt with the Improved Trip feat. However, in such cases, the cost to perform the technique increases to 5 martial action points. The iron duelist cannot use this ability more than once for any given action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

**Improved Ram Strike (Ex):** Beginning at 13<sup>th</sup> level, foes who use the withdraw action to exit a square that an iron duelist threatens provoke an attack of opportunity from the iron duelist, as though they had moved normally.

**Brutal Ram (Ex):** An iron duelist eventually learns to deliver more powerful blows against creatures she is dueling. Beginning at 11<sup>th</sup> level, the



iron duelist can spend 3 martial action points in order to gain a +3 bonus on all damage rolls made against a creature that is the target of her iron offence ability. At  $14^{th}$  level, and every 3 levels thereafter, this bonus increases by +1, to a maximum of +6 at  $20^{th}$  level.

**Iron Critical (Ex):** As she approaches the pinnacle of her mastery, the iron duelist is better able to deliver deadly blow to her enemies. Beginning at 18<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the iron duelist makes an attack against a creature who is the target of her iron offense ability, she increases the critical multiplier of the weapon by 1 for the purposes of that attack.

**Greater Ram Strike (Ex):** Beginning at 19<sup>th</sup> level, foes who take a 5-ft. step to exit a square that an iron duelist threatens provoke an attack of opportunity from the iron duelist, as though they had moved normally.

#### Playing an Iron Duelist

Iron duelists are obsessed with proving their worth through martial combat and everything they do is done with the ultimate goal of improving their ability to do just that. While some iron duelists are violent men with a lust for wanton combat and others are civilized champions of just causes, all iron duelists share the same pride in fighting and place high emphasis on winning battles.

Iron duelists view the world as full of foes to be overcome. They strive always to prove themselves the best, not by achieving heights greater than other men but by defeating other men directly, thus proving their superiority beyond any doubt. Apart from this basic ideal, iron duelists have many personal philosophies that produce wildly different world views in individuals.

Races: Iron duelists hail from many races, but humans and dwarves are the most common due to their commonly short tempers and flair for violence. Elves, particularly young elves with a passion for dueling that their elders find distasteful, can sometimes become iron duelists in the pursuit of becoming the best at their chosen craft. Half-elves or half-orcs become iron duelists for the same reasons humans do—because they find themselves in a lot of fights and want to win. Halflings and gnomes with a martial bent often choose the path of the iron duelist because of the emphasis on single combat, and powerful techniques help make up for their lack of physical prowess. Smaller iron duelists often have a chip on their shoulder and may rush blindly into more damage than they can handle.

**Religion:** Iron duelists are sometimes religious, especially those who choose to devote their services to a cause, as many find themselves drawn to churches of their particular ideologies as worthy patrons. Others find that worshiping gods of combat can give them an edge in fights. Some others worship gods of death, as they know that they court death and send many to their graves every day.

**Other Classes:** Iron duelists would much prefer to fight others than work alongside them, but often find that their journeys necessitate the aid of members of other classes. In general, iron duelists prefer to surround themselves with supporting casts, favoring bards, who can chronicle the deeds of the iron duelist and empower her in combat, above all others. They also find that clerics are incredibly handy to have around, as they can both enhance the iron duelist before battle and patch her up afterwards. Wizards are invaluable in finding worthy challenges and dispelling magical defenses that make fights unfair. Iron duelists find that other martial characters mostly get in the way, and so prefer to spend as little time with lesser fighting men as possible.

#### Iron Duelists in the World

This must be stopped! This barbarian has been running around the city convincing all of our young nobles to duel him, and they have all been humiliatingly defeated. More than a few have died! The guild of fencing instructors is in an uproar, not to mention the parents of these young fools! And sending the guard after the madman has been...less than successful. We must find a way to get rid of him!

#### ~Vizier Esserand Vimar

Iron duelists are duelists first, and everything else comes second. They live for the fight and take great pride in it. To the iron duelist, nothing is so worthy a cause as fighting, and most iron duelists spend their lives traveling the world looking for foes worth having it out with.

**Daily Life:** Iron duelists come from a wide variety of backgrounds, which impacts their lifestyles in predictable ways. Iron duelists with wealthy backgrounds often stay in the most elaborate accommodations, eating fancy food and keeping company with the wealthy. On the other hand, an iron duelist whose background was in sailing would likely spend most of his life on his ship, traveling the seas and looking for adventure. Most iron duelists have one thing in common, though: they like to travel. Once they've defeated all their local rivals, an iron duelist must go out into the world in order to seek new challenges and live a fulfilling life.

**Notables:** Iron duelists occasionally achieve great notoriety, though most are killed in duels before they have any chance to do more than make wouldbe victims uncomfortable. Most often, iron duelists achieve fame for killing lots of people and receive admiration based solely on their skill with a sword.

Maximilion Scherzend is the most notable iron duelist of the modern age, and has achieved something of legendary status after his 100<sup>th</sup> recorded victory in an honor duel. A mercenary who cares more about the chance to fight than what he is fighting for, Maximilion has been a terror of knights and tyrants alike throughout the world. One of his most famous exploits was when he defeated the Emperor Phasiss in single combat at the behest of Duke Trimoldi, only to challenge and subsequently slay Trimoldi two hours later at the behest of Phasiss' widow. Perhaps the most dangerous thing about Maximilion is that the challenge of the fight can often result in him lowering his normally obscene fees, making a visit from him a nightmare for powerful fighters throughout the lands.

The founder of the iron ram school and first of the iron duelists was a man called Hans Villner, who wished for nothing less than to be the greatest swordsman of all time. He wandered many kingdoms, seeking the best warriors and challenging them to duels as a way to prove his prowess. He defeated each in turn and was soon recognized as the greatest fighter of all time, a problem which many warriors saw as a threat to their own survival. Thus, eight warriors of great skill all confronted Villner at once, and though his skill was such that he defeated four of them in turn, he was ultimately overwhelmed by their numbers and killed. Years later, his journals were found containing the secrets of his techniques, which would be compiled and learned by swordsmen around the world.

**Organizations:** Iron duelists are traditionally considered to be lone wolves, choosing to abstain from forming formal organizations. Thus, while a number of prominent schools for dueling might contain an iron duelist or two among the faculty, they rarely form organizations of their own. That said, the secrets of the iron ram, although slowly trickling into the mainstream, are still a closely guarded secret. A secret society named the Order of the Book of the Ram strives to ensure that only the worthy receive instruction in this style, attempting to assassinate those who teach it wantonly. At the same time, they seek to ensure that the secrets of the style live on in great fighters, and often one or more members will clandestinely approach skilled duelists and offer them membership or teach them new techniques.

NPC Reactions: With a few exceptions for iron duelists who are generally well liked or famous, most NPCs react negatively to those they know will likely attempt to do violence soon. Some are approached by town guards and informed that they cannot pursue duels of any kind if they wish to stay in town, though other times an iron duelist may be approached by skilled fighters, eager to beat the iron duelist to the punch.

**Iron Duelist Lore:** Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research iron duelists to learn more about them. When a character makes this skill check, read or paraphrase the information from the table below, including the entries for lower DCs.

#### **DC** Information

- 10 Iron duelists are masters of the iron ram style of martial combat.
- 15 Iron duelists are martial artists specializing in one-on-one combat.
- 20 Iron duelists are more powerful when fighting the same foe round after round, and possess special abilities to prevent their foes from attacking other creatures.
- 25 Even the most powerful of iron duelists pale in comparison with other warriors of the same caliber when fighting many foes at once.
- 30 Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific iron duelists, the areas in which they operate, the activities they undertake, and so on.



#### **River Walker**

I've traveled many miles and seen all manner of fighters. I've seen styles and techniques from around the world and beaten them all without complicated blade strikes or fancy flourishes. The simple truth is that any fighter can be outmaneuvered and overtaken by a warrior who has gained mastery over his movements and learned to understand his place in the world.

#### ~Chor Ishan, River Walker

River walkers are bold warrior scholars who represent the principles of the flowing river style of martial combat. They wander the world in search of challenging fights in order to expand their knowledge and achieve mastery over their style. True adherents of the flowing river school, river walkers exemplify that martial style through the practice of a highly mobile form of combat.

River walkers differ from traditional fighters in that they emphasize a mobile form of combat which allows them to move across the battlefield at an incredible pace. Because of their emphasis on movement, river walkers are more lightly armored than traditional fighters. River walkers rely on their mobility to outmaneuver their foes and end combat quickly. In keeping with the flowing river style, river walkers rely on the clever use of martial techniques rather than brute force to achieve their aims. While river walkers are able to use all forms of martial techniques, they focus on techniques from the flowing river school.

#### Making a River Walker

In many ways, river walkers are similar to fighters and other warrior classes, but because of their emphasis on high mobility they are more lightly armored. River walkers focus on the use of technique feats and in remaining mobile, rather than on weapon training for delivering powerful blows.

**Abilities:** As melee combatants, river walkers prioritize many of the same ability scores as fighters. Strength is of paramount importance to the river

walker, as it influences the amount of damage that he does and how often he hits with melee attacks. A high Dexterity score is much more important to river walkers than to other fighters, because in order to maximize their high rate of movement, they often wear light or no armor. Wisdom is often the most important mental statistic for river walkers, as it contributes to their Will save and allows them to resist many of the more dangerous mind-affecting abilities. A high Charisma score is important to those river walkers who feint in combat, or who emphasize success in social situations.

Alignment: River walkers may have any alignment. However, most river walkers are wanderers and vagabonds, and thus tend towards chaotic alignments. River walkers are equally likely to be good or evil, with good river walkers journeying the world primarily for personal enlightenment and to spread philosophies of the flowing river school, while evil river walkers often become roaming marauders, using their skills to take what they can and move on before they can be brought to justice for their crimes.

**HD:** d10.

#### **Class Skills**

The river walker's class skills are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (geography) (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Stealth (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Swim (Str).

Skill Ranks Per Level: 2 + Intelligence modifier.

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the river walker.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: River walkers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armor and shields, but not tower shields.

**Bonus Feat:** River walkers are gifted in using the techniques of the flowing river school. At 1st level, the river walker gains the Combat Artist feat and either

#### Table 1-3: The River Walker

	Base Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
ıst	+1	+2	+2	+0	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Flowing river style
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Defense of the river
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	River mastery 1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Rushing river
7th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Elusive step
8th	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Flowing precision
10th	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	River mastery 2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	As the flood
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	Bonus feat
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	River's wrath
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	Sudden surging
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+5	River mastery 3
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+10	+5	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Unassailable step
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Cascading river
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Routing river
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Bonus feat, river mastery 4

the Flowing Forward feat or the Tactical Advancement feat as bonus feats. At 4<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, the river walker gains a new flowing river technique feat as a bonus feat. He must still meet all prerequisites necessary to gain the chosen feat.

**Flowing River Style (Ex):** As experts in the flowing river style, river walkers are better at using the school's techniques and stances than their peers. Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the river walker is treated as though he had more flowing river technique feats than he actually possesses for the purposes of feats and abilities that rely on the number of flowing river technique feats he possesses. For every two flowing river technique feats the river walker possesses, he is treated as though he possesses one more flowing river technique feat for the purposes of such feats and abilities.

**Defense of the River (Ex):** River walkers are adept at using their exceptional mobility to better defend themselves. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, whenever he moves at least 30 feet, the river walker gains a dodge bonus to AC equal to 1/4 his river walker level (rounded down, minimum 1).

**River Mastery (Ex):** As he gains experience and skill, a river walker becomes a true master of the flowing river school techniques. Beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the river walker uses a flowing river technique feat, he needs to spend 1 less martial action point to do so than he otherwise would. This cannot reduce the cost below 1 point. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the cost is decreased by an additional martial action point.

**Rushing River (Ex):** The key to a river walker's power is mobility, and he is able to channel the energy from any technique he performs to enhance his mobility to become truly formidable. Beginning at  $6^{th}$  level, whenever a river walker uses a technique feat, his land speed increases by 10 feet until the beginning of his next turn.

**Elusive Step (Ex):** River walkers move with such great alacrity that they can evade most blows. Beginning at 7th level, whenever the river walker would provoke an attack of opportunity as a result of movement, the river walker may spend a number of martial action points equal to 3 + 1 per previous attack of opportunity made against him as a result of movement this round. If he does, the attack automatically misses. Martial action points spent this way do not count against the number of martial action points the river walker may spend during a round.



**Flowing Precision (Ex):** River walkers are able to focus their movement to make their attacks more accurate. Beginning at 9<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the river walker moves at least 30 feet, he gains a bonus on all melee attack rolls equal to 1/4 his river walker level.

As the Flood (Ex): River walkers flow over terrain of all kinds as water during a flood. Beginning at 11<sup>th</sup> level, whenever he uses a technique feat, he ignores the effects of difficult terrain, as well as any spell or effect which would hamper his movement. This ability only provides immunity against any effect which hampers his movement and may not provide immunity to other effects of the spell or ability which is hampering his movement (*for example, a river walker moving through the area of a* spike stone *spell would move at full speed, but still suffer 1d8 points of damage for every 5 feet he moves through the area*).

**River's Wrath (Ex):** River walkers are able to focus the energy of their movement to deliver deadly attacks. Beginning at 13<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the river walker moves at least 30 feet he gains a bonus on all

damage rolls made as part of melee attacks equal to 1/4 his river walker level.

**Sudden Surging (Ex):** River walkers move with near-impossible speed, allowing them to surge forward short distances and then spring forth like water released from a dam. Beginning at 14<sup>th</sup> level, the river walker can take a single 5-ft. step and also move normally in the same round.

**Unassailable Step (Ex):** River walkers are able to move to stay out of the reach of any foe. At 17<sup>th</sup> level, the river walker never provokes an attack of opportunity as a result of moving out of an opponent's threat range.

**Cascading River (Ex):** The most skilled river walkers achieve great momentum and focus when they move great distances. Beginning at 18<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the river walker moves at least 60 feet, he may spend 5 martial action points as a free action; if he does, then he doubles all bonuses granted to AC, attack rolls, and weapon damage rolls by his defense of the river, flowing precision, and river's wrath class features.

**Routing River (Ex):** River walkers are able to a great speed potentially giving their attacks the potential to slay an opponent in a single blow. At 19<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the river walker moves at least 30 feet, he increases the critical multiplier of any weapon he wields by 1. For every 30 feet he moves beyond the first 30 feet, the critical multiplier of any weapon he wields is increased by an additional 1.

#### Playing a River Walker

River walkers are warriors first, and wanderers a close second. They travel the world year-round to learn the art of combat, as well as to better understand their place in an ever-changing and evolving environment. They pride themselves on martial philosophy as well as on staying connected with the world. They believe there is always more to learn, and that the best way to learn is through firsthand experience.

River walkers are not afraid to get their hands dirty, and frequently seek out new challenges and dangers, eager to test their skills. Through conflict, river walkers seek to improve their skills and their understanding of martial philosophy. To this end, most river walkers wander the world, never staying in one place for too long. River walkers lust for adventure and new experiences and often plunge recklessly into dangers unknown.

**Races:** River walkers can come from any race, but are most often human due to that race's large population. Elven river walkers are also quite common, as the swift, flowing, graceful moves of the flowing river style appeal to them aesthetically. Dwarves, halflings, and gnomes are more likely to choose other martial schools or disciplines to specialize in; however, those small folk who do choose to become river walkers often find that the increased speed and mobility make up for many of their natural weaknesses.

**Religion:** The flowing river school is not a religious institution, and river walkers have no common religion. Most river walkers follow deities of travel, warfare, or strength, finding that such gods and goddesses have portfolios which coincide with their own interests. Religious river walkers often undertake duties for churches of their gods and goddesses that take them far afield, and which other followers of the church deem too dangerous or too inconvenient.

Non-religious river walkers often find comfort in the philosophy of combat and of self-actualization, viewing their journeys as the first step of selfdiscovery and believing that one's true potential can only be found when divorced from organized religion.

**Other Classes:** Most river walkers find adventuring life too demanding to take on without the aid of other skilled adventurers. River walkers get along best with other members of martial classes, particularly fighters and devotees of other martial schools. They share a special kinship with specialized fighting men and appreciate their devotion to martial philosophy and skill-at-arms. River walkers also get along well with barbarians and rangers who share their wanderlust and complement their combat skills. Religious river walkers often travel with clerics of their deity and find that their healing magic, as well as their ability to provide spells to enhance their combat prowess, make them exceptionally useful allies. River walkers of a less religious bent may travel with druids for the same reasons. River walkers often travel with bards or rogues, whose skills in social situations and in dealing with non-combat-related threats are vital to their success. River walkers occasionally ally themselves with arcane spellcasters, such as wizards or sorcerers, in order to augment their impressive combat skills with a little magical aid. In such alliances, river walkers prefer wizards and sorcerers who focus on enhancing the river walker's fighting abilities, and restricting their foes' movement so they can better deal with them.

#### River Walkers in the World

He moved like lightning, leading his men across the battlefield with such speed as was terrible to behold. He was moving so quickly it was impossible to aim a shot at him and we were forced to watch as are men were helplessly butchered before us. We retreated soon after.

#### ~Cromwell, Captain of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Archer Division

River walkers wander the world searching for challenges and seeking to widen the boundaries of their martial philosophy. Roaming swordsmen, river walkers often seek out the best fighters and most skilled warriors in an area to test their abilities against them. Rarely staying in one place for long, river walkers leave little lasting impact on communities beyond the legacy of their martial prowess.

**Daily Life:** River walkers lead a nomadic lifestyle and spend much of their life on the road. Most wander without purpose, striding indifferently from one place to the next and searching for the next challenge. Always seeking to expand their personal knowledge of martial philosophy and combat, as well as to spread their knowledge to others, river walkers remain connected the world primarily through speaking with warriors and would-be warriors about the battle's way. River walkers believe that the true philosophy behind the flowing river school varies from person to person and is tailored to the individual's own experience, and therefore that enlightenment can only be achieved through exploration and constantly testing one's own limits.

Notables: With the river walkers propensity for wandering and seeking out ever-greater challenges, it's inevitable that some of them achieve great notoriety. Of all of these, the most famous living river walker is Kuldor the Stout. Kuldor was well known as a man of great muscle and incredible speed, and achieved his notoriety during the campaign of the Black Rose, when Black Rose, a female mercenary of fearsome repute, was slaving her way across the Seven Kingdoms. Kuldor, on a whim, battled Black Rose, slaving her and several of her elite mercenaries. The remaining mercenaries swore allegiance to Kuldor, who made them give up their ways as sellswords and taught them the way of the flowing river, eventually founding a school in the very place where he defeated them

The founder of the flowing river style was a human of humble beginnings, named Red Mist. Red Mist was the mightiest warrior of a savage but noble people who lived on the banks of a river, which has since been renamed a dozen times. He came to learn of combat artistry from an explorer who came from over a vast sea, who taught him much about finding calm and peace, in addition to teaching him the power of speed over strength. In time it came that no foe could stand against Red Mist, who moved about the battlefield with fluid grace, always striking from the best position. Eventually overcome by wanderlust, Red Mist began to travel the land looking for new styles of combat to observe, and to spread his own unique style of savage ferocity and flowing grace. He attracted many disciples during his journey and taught them all he knew. He turned none away, even teaching hated rivals and weak and wretched peasants.

**Organizations:** River walkers tend to avoid forming organizations of their own, instead preferring to wander the world learning and teaching martial arts and philosophy. Occasionally, individual river walkers will form a temporary school in order to instruct large groups of students, though it is far more common to take on a handful of apprentices who join the river walker on his journey. Because river walkers tend to lead nomadic lifestyles, they rarely join other organizations unless they allow for a lot of travel and independence.

Even so, a few organizations for river walkers do exist. Paramount among these is the Knights of the Eagle, a military organization which utilizes the philosophy behind the combat of the flowing river school. Though the organization does call upon members to drill as a team in times of peace and fight as a unit during times of war, under command of whatever lord or duke has contracted them, the actual demands of the Knights of the Eagle are minimal, and most of the time members are encouraged to seek enlightenment and better the world through their deeds.

Another organization which recently came into existence is the Kuldor School of Martial Arts, located in beautiful Ezaria. The school is easily the largest building in the otherwise quaint border town and offers training in a strict and hierarchal environment. The school is run by a council of four former mercenaries: Birian Stron, who is known to be both fair and generous; Emmilia the Bloody, who is well liked by the students because of her friendly and informal attitude; Ivan Gretch, who is thought to be corrupt and who clearly has no love for the philosophy behind the highly useful flowing river techniques; and Vrek, a goblin warrior who is thought to be best left alone because of her rumored terrible temper. The school teaches the techniques of the flowing river to those who wish to learn, and makes a less than admirable attempt to explain the philosophy behind the school.

NPC Reactions: Generally, river walkers are received about as well as any wandering warrior would be. Those interested in martial techniques highly value the presence of river walker because of their general proclivity to teach their skills to those who are willing to learn.

**River Walker Lore:** Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research river walker to learn more about them. When a character makes this skill check, read or paraphrase the information from the table below, including the entries for lower DCs.

#### **DC** Information

- 10 River walkers are warriors specializing in the flowing river school.
- 15 River walkers are highly mobile fighters who rely on their exceptional movement in order to overcome their adversaries.

- 20 River walkers are blisteringly fast on the battlefield, even for practitioners of the already quick-flowing river school.
- 25 As they gain in skill, river walkers learn to make the most out of their movement, gaining greater accuracy and power when they move \ great distances.
- 30 Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific river walkers, the areas in which they operate, the activities they undertake, and so on.

#### Shadow Assassin

Some people say our methods are underhanded, dishonorable, unclean, cowardly, and weak...they don't often get a chance to say so twice, however.

~Breena, Shadow Assassin

Shadow assassins are warriors who fight in the most duplicitous and underhanded ways to achieve their victory. They strike unseen, and they don't hesitate to attack a man on his back or to stab at his eyes. They kill without remorse or reprieve, and no action on the battlefield is beneath them.

Shadow assassins make the most out of any advantage they can seize in combat, whether that means backstabbing a foe, or striking when their target has no chance to defend themselves. Shadow assassins want to kill their enemies as fast as possible and with as little personal risk to themselves as they can manage, and don't care at all if other fighters think their methods are underhanded or dishonorable.

#### Making a Shadow Assassin

A shadow assassin relies on whatever she can get to gain an advantage on her enemies, and thus employs a number of underhanded strategies to accomplish her goals. She doesn't care about many of the virtues that fighters sometimes value, and thus employs a number of rogue-like skills to achieve her ends. Though less adept at the such arts than a true rogue, and prone to struggle in battles where there is no advantage to exploit, a shadow assassin is able to perform both roles well enough to become a truly deadly force in her own right.

Abilities: Shadow assassins depend on Strength to damage their foes; whether this means delivering devastating sneak attacks with accuracy or using a powerful composite bow from afar, a high Strength is important to the shadow assassin, though perhaps less so than to other martial characters. Dexterity is perhaps the most important ability for the shadow assassin, who relies on Dexterity for her AC and ability to hide from foes, and thus surprise them. A high Constitution is less critical to the shadow assassin, who would just as soon avoid ever being hit in combat as withstand lots of blows. A high Wisdom is less important to the shadow assassin than to other classes, as dangerous wizards cannot use mental attacks against the shadow assassin if they cannot find her, and will most likely be dead before they get a second chance at the shadow assassin. A high Charisma is important to shadow assassins who feint in combat or who like to deceive their foes.

Alignment: Shadow assassins are dishonorable and underhanded fighters who kill without moral or lawful restrictions, thus they are very rarely of good alignment and even more rarely of lawful alignment. The original shadow assassins were an honorable guild which dealt with problems in a dishonorable way, effectively serving justice where traditional justice had failed. The contract was everything, and the relationship between the client, the people, and the assassins was held sacred. That was a long time ago, however, and in the modern world most shadow assassins kill for profit and have no scruples at all. Neutral evil is the most common alignment for shadow assassins.

HD: d10.

#### **Class Skills**

The shadow assassin's class skills are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (local) (Int), Linguistics (Int), Perception (Wis), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Stealth (Dex), Swim (Str).

#### Table 1-4: The Shadow Assassin

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	Base Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Infinite shadow style
3rd 4th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Shadow mastery 1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
7th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Wrap in shadows
8th	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Sneak attack +3d6
10th	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Shadow mastery 2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	Improved wrap in shadows
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	Bonus feat, sneak attack +4d6
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	Double team
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	Crippling blow
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+5	Shadow mastery 3, sneak attack +5d6
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+10	+5	Bonus feat, greater wrap in shadows
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Improved crippling blow
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Sneak attack +6d6
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Greater crippling blow
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Bonus feat, shadow mastery 4

Skill Ranks Per Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier.

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the shadow assassin.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Shadow assassins are proficient will all simple weapons and martial weapons, plus the kama, shuriken, and whip. They are proficient with light armor, but not with shields.

**Bonus Feat**: Shadow assassins are particularly adept at the techniques of the infinite shadow school of martial combat. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, the shadow assassin receives the Combat Artist feat and either the Assassin's Strike feat or the Shadow Strike feat as bonus feats. Additionally, at 4<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, she gains an additional infinite shadow feat as a bonus feat. She must still meet all prerequisites necessary to gain the chosen feat.

**Infinite Shadow Style**: As experts in the infinite shadow style, shadow assassins are better at

using the school's techniques and stances than their peers. Beginning at 2nd level, the shadow assassin is treated as though she had more infinite shadow technique feats than she actually possesses for the purposes of feats and abilities that rely on the number of infinite shadow technique feats she possesses. For every two infinite shadow technique feats the shadow assassin possesses, she is treated as though she possesses one more infinite shadow technique feat for the purposes of such feats and abilities.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** If a shadow assassin can catch an opponent when he is unable to defend himself effectively from her attack, she can strike a vital spot for extra damage. Beginning at 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the shadow assassin's attack deals extra damage anytime her target would be denied a Dexterity bonus to AC (whether the target actually has a Dexterity bonus or not), or when the shadow assassin flanks her target. This extra damage is 1d6 at 3rd level, and increases by 1d6 every three shadow assassin levels thereafter. Should the shadow assassin score a critical hit with a sneak attack, this extra damage is not multiplied. Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only if the target is within 30 feet.

Unlike a rogue, the shadow assassin cannot deal nonlethal damage with a sneak attack, and if

she is wielding a weapon which only deals nonlethal damage, she cannot make a sneak attack to deal extra damage in this way.

The shadow assassin must be able to see the target well enough to pick out a vital spot and must be able to reach such a spot. A shadow assassin cannot sneak attack while striking a creature with concealment.

If the shadow assassin possesses sneak attack damage from another source, combine the amount of sneak attack dice to determine how much sneak attack damage she deals. Any sneak attack damage gained as a result of the shadow assassin class still cannot be used with a nonlethal weapon, however.

**Shadow Mastery (Ex):** As a shadow assassin continues to practice her techniques and skills, she learns to perform infinite shadow techniques more easily than other characters. Beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the shadow assassin uses an infinite shadow technique feat, she needs to spend 1 less martial action point to do so than she otherwise would. This cannot reduce the cost below 1 point. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the cost is decreased by an additional martial action point.

Wrap in Shadows (Ex): A shadow assassin can hide in her own shadow, using her martial prowess to move in such a way as to hide even while observed. Beginning at 7<sup>th</sup> level, the shadow assassin can spend 7 martial action points as a standard action in order to use the Stealth skill to hide even while observed.

**Improved Wrap in Shadows (Ex):** Beginning at 11<sup>th</sup> level, the shadow assassin can spend an additional martial action point whenever she uses her wrap in shadows class feature in order to use it as a move action, instead of a standard action. If she does so, she also gains a bonus on the Stealth check equal to 1/4 her class level.

**Double Team (Ex):** A shadow assassin takes advantage of foes who leave themselves open to her attack. Beginning at 13<sup>th</sup> level, the shadow assassin doubles the bonus to attack rolls she receives from flanking an opponent, and can flank creatures with improved uncanny dodge as though she were a rogue of her level.



**Greater Wrap in Shadows (Ex):** Beginning at 16<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the shadow assassin uses her improved wrap in shadows ability, she can spend 1 additional martial action point. If she does, she can use the ability as a swift action, instead of a move action.

**Crippling Blow (Ex):** A shadow assassin learns to use her sneak attack to not only injure, but to cause lasting damage to her foes by striking vital spots. Starting at 14<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the shadow assassin successfully makes a sneak attack against a living creature, she may choose to reduce the amount of sneak attack damage she inflicts by 1d6. If she does, the target suffers 1 point of Strength damage.

**Improved Crippling Blow (Ex):** Beginning at 17<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the shadow assassin successfully makes a sneak attack against a living creature, she may choose to reduce the amount of sneak attack damage she inflicts by 2d6. If she does, the target suffers 1 point of Strength damage and 1 point of Dexterity damage. This ability can be used on the same attack as the crippling blow class feature (reducing the amount of sneak attack damage by 3d6 and inflicting 2 points of Strength damage and 1 point of Dexterity damage).

**Greater Crippling Blow (Ex):** Beginning at 19<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the shadow assassin successfully makes a sneak attack against a living creature, she may choose to reduce the amount of sneak attack damage she inflicts by 3d6. If she does, the target suffers 1 point of Strength damage, 1 point

of Dexterity damage, and 1 point of Constitution damage. This ability can be used on the same attack as the crippling blow class and improved crippling blow class features (reducing the amount of sneak attack damage by 6d6 and inflicting 3 points of Strength damage, 2 points of Dexterity damage, and 1 point of Constitution damage).

#### Playing a Shadow Assassin

Shadow assassins do whatever it takes to get the job done, no matter how wicked, cowardly or underhanded it might be. They use poison, stealthy attacks, and whatever else they can to accomplish their goals. They have no romantic notions about combat, and would much rather kill their foes in their sleep than actually fight them.

Shadow assassing view the world as foolish and naïve, and use that to their advantage. They lie, they cheat, and they steal, and they have no qualms about it. The average shadow assassin cares about one thing—herself—and the rest of the world can burn around her; she lit the fire, after all.

**Races**: Shadow assassins are occasionally found among members of all the common races, though humans, half–elves, half-orcs, and halflings are by far the most common. Halflings' natural gifts for stealth make them ideal shadow assassins, much in the same way that they make good rogues. Humans and their ilk who are naturally deceptive, underhanded, and looking for any edge against more powerful and well-established races flock to the class, as well. Dwarves are one of the most accepting races towards shadow assassins, as a whole, and are more likely to understand the realities of war and the need to be merciless on the battlefield, even if it's all business.

**Religion:** Shadow assassins tend not to be religious, and are often too busy with their day-today affairs to worry about the afterlife, or the wishes of abstract and far-off divine entities. Many of them have little interest in the tenets of religions, just as they have little interest in the rules of combat. Of course, some manage to find deities that appeal to their sensibilities, such as those who promote ruthless, noholds-barred combat, or who are patrons to those who skulk in shadows. Others have a different, but no less pragmatic approach to religion, paying lip service to a wide number of deities in the hopes that doing so will ensure that he gains the favor of at least one of them, reasoning that the favor of a god is definitely an advantage worth having.

Other Classes: Shadow assassins are generally quick to appreciate the talents of just about any potential travelling companions: those who are able to handle problems that he, himself, cannot are highly valued, but even those who fulfill similar roles (such as rogues and fighters) are appreciated, as they take some of the pressure off of him. Shadow assassins often have issues with paladins, monks, and anyone else who objects to their ruthless combat style. Depending on the company, a shadow assassin may hold back a bit in combat in order to avoid a confrontation with such allies, or he may flaunt his style and dare his detractors to do anything about it, but generally they would rather avoid the trouble either way.

#### Shadow Assassins in the World

Yes, they're dishonorable. It's easy not to like a man who tries to gouge your eyes out with one hand and trip you with the other, or who would rather stab you when your back is turned than when you're facing him, but at the end of the day, they're effective. And besides, is being stabbed in the back by a shadow assassin really that much worse than being stabbed in the front by someone else? Don't mistake their willingness to take advantage of your vulnerabilities as a weakness of their own.

### ~Garth Eagleeye, mercenary captain extraordinaire.

Shadow assassins are selfish, secretive, and dangerous. They are out only for themselves, and are willing to do whatever it takes to get ahead. This doesn't mean that they murder and maim indiscriminately, but if violence—including murder is the easiest means for them to accomplish their goals, they are unlikely to balk at it. In fact, despite their name, many shadow assassins take the teachings of their style only so far, and though they will take every advantage they can get in a fight, they're not all contract killers. **Daily Life:** While many shadow assassins are criminals, and possibly even actual assassins, just as many are not. While it would be very unusual to find a shadow assassin amongst a knightly order, or in the town guard, it's not uncommon at all to find them as mercenaries, and while the distinction between mercenaries and assassins can occasionally be a bit blurry, a good number of shadow assassins are able to walk that particular line. Shadow assassins avoid fights whenever possible, and so tend to be more circumspect about their profession than other martial artists. When on a job they seek to finish it as quickly and neatly as possible, with as few complications, even if it means cutting a few corners in the morality or honor departments.

Notables: Being notable makes you noticeable and typically leads to trouble, so very few shadow assassins achieve any real measure of notoriety. However, "Don" Allegio Macrona is a name that inspires fear thought the port city of Ysmire. Though the city doesn't officially recognize him, the Don rules the city in truth through his dangerous assassins. The king himself pays heavy bribes to keep Macrona's blade from his throat, and is forced to listen to all his corrupt policy decisions. Many a politician has offered adventurers of all stripes a great deal of gold to defeat the Don and his men, and many adventurers coming to Ysmire have died in their beds late at night, when witnesses are nowhere to be found, with others (the ones who are more cautious or otherwise manage to make their way into the Don's presence) apparently finding other sources of income and leaving the job unfinished.

The shadow assassins have their origins in a far-off land and buried deep in their history are the noble ideals of justice and righteous resistance against corrupt and foreign governments. The first of the shadow assassins was a man called Koga Nightshadow, who grew up in an age of oppression and corruption. His homeland was occupied by a foreign empire, and his people were brutalized and abused at every turn by foreigners, and then victimized further by a government which would do nothing to protect its own. Koga saw the injustice of it all and took matters into his own hands, taking the lives of those responsible in the most brutal fashion possible to relate the frustration of his people. He found others eager to join his cause and seek justice for the wrongdoings of these foreigners, but without any formal training. Koga taught them the simplest and most efficient mode of combat he knew, and his organization grew to great influence and became a sort of police force throughout the corrupt empire. Years after Koga's death and the empire's fall, this police system remained intact and spread throughout the world, and in time became itself corrupt and villainous.

**Organizations:** The infinite shadow style of combat grew up in a single organization, and more than any other type of martial artist, shadow assassins tend to form organizations for themselves, usually run by small "clans" or families, which handle the local affairs in a decentralized way. The official doctrines of many shadow assassin organizations still mandate that they are to serve the causes of justice, as in accordance with local needs, though these ideals often remain solely in the pages of the organization's charters, and in reality many such groups are nothing more than brutal and abusive gangs, which do a lot more harm than good.

NPC Reactions: A character that is openly known to be a shadow assassin is likely to be the object of scorn, and, quite possibly, fear from the local populace. Most other martial artists frown on the ruthless infinite shadow school, and openly using such techniques in most martial contests is discouraged at best, and often banned entirely. It is very easy for shadow assassins to pass themselves off as "just another fighter" to those who do not know much about martial techniques, however, and that is what most shadow assassins do.

Shadow Assassin Lore: Characters with ranks in Knowledge (local) can research shadow assassins to learn more about them. When a character makes this skill check, read or paraphrase the information from the table below, including the entries for lower DCs.

#### **DC** Information

- 10 Shadow assassins are warriors who specialize in the infinite shadow school.
- 15 Shadow assassins are rogue-like fighters who will do anything to achieve their goals.
- 20 Shadow assassing have the ability to sneak attack their foes in order to take advantage of

enemies in compromising positions.

- 25 In addition to being experts at sneak attack and the infinite shadow school of fighting, the shadow assassin gains a greater advantage from foes who leave themselves open to attack.
- 30 Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific shadow assassins, the areas in which they operate, the activities they undertake, and so on.

#### Swallow

You want to learn how to fight, eh? Well, you've come to the right place; the graceful swallow will teach you how to fight. We'll show you everything you need to know to beat your foes—every advanced technique, every graceful maneuver. Remember though, we aren't mindless killers. We teach fighting here, lad, so if it's blood you're after, look elsewhere.

#### ~Ken Nevarr, Graceful Swallow Instructor

Swallows, named for the style of combat that they employ, specialize in the flowing and elegant graceful swallow school. Elevating the art of combat beyond the necessity for violence, swallows are perhaps the most refined and civilized fighters alive. Swallows concentrate all their skills on one thing: the use of combat maneuvers. And they certainly excel at them. While a swallow has the basic knowledge of combat to slay his enemies in the traditional fashion, he prefers to act with more grace and style, disabling his foes and proving his superiority before deciding whether or not to deliver the final blow. To a swallow, the greatest victory is when a humiliated and thoroughly beaten foe surrenders and admits the swallow's superiority.

#### Making a Swallow

In many ways, the swallow is one of the simplest characters: his focus is entirely in one specialized area: combat maneuvers. However, the swallow's focus on combat maneuvers also makes him highly limited in functionality, and poor combatants in some situations, which means that individual swallows often have to explore other avenues in order to succeed when their combat skills fail (such as when fighting incorporeal wraiths).

Ability Scores: It is without question that Strength is the most important ability score to the swallow, as it is the only ability score that contributes directly to his combat maneuver bonus, and because it is necessary for a variety of combat maneuver-related feats. Dexterity is also very important to the swallow; as a lightly-armored fighter, high Dexterity allows a swallow to avoid his opponent's strikes. It also contributes to his CMD, which is important whenever a swallow duels another of his kind, something that happens frequently. A high Intelligence is also important to the swallow, as it allows access to the Combat Expertise feat, which gives them a boost to AC and allows access to certain combat maneuverrelated feats. A high Charisma is not strictly important to the swallow's combat ability, though many do like to feint in combat. However, the adherents of the graceful swallow school tend to be preoccupied with their appearance and social standing, and as self-styled gentlemen and ladies, many swallows invest at least a few of their ability score points into a higher than normal Charisma.

Alignment: Swallows can be of any alignment, though they have a slight tendency towards chaotic alignments due to their trademark arrogance and free spirits. That being said, swallows' emphasis on ritualized, structured, and, above all, civilized combat appeals strongly to characters of lawful bent. Swallows are slightly more likely to be good than evil due to the non-lethal philosophy behind the school; however, many of the most vile and wicked individuals find that people are a lot easier to rob and murder when they are disarmed and on their backs.

**HD:** d10.

#### Class Skills

The swallow's class skills are Acrobatics (Dex), Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Stealth (Dex), and Swim (Str).

#### Table 1-5: The Swallow

	Base Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	
Level	Bonus	Save	Save	Save	Special
ıst	+1	+2	+2	+0	Bonus feat
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Graceful swallow style
3rd 4th	+3	+3	+3	+1	Signature technique
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus feat
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Graceful mastery 1
6th	+6/+1	+5	+5	+2	Signature technique
7th	+7/+2	+5	+5	+2	Swallow's defense
8th	+8/+3	+6	+6	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+6	+3	Signature technique
10th	+10/+5	+7	+7	+3	Graceful mastery 2
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+3	Swallow's dodge
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+4	Bonus feat, signature technique
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+4	Darting swallow
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+9	+4	Deft recovery
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+5	Graceful mastery 3
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+10	+5	Bonus feat
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+5	Blinding speed
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+11	+6	Signature technique
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+11	+6	Deadly swallow
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+12	+6	Bonus feat, graceful mastery 4

Skill Ranks per Level: 2 + Intelligence modifier

#### **Class Features**

All of the following are class features of the swallow.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Swallows are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, plus the whip and hand crossbow. They are proficient with light armor and bucklers, but not with other types of shields.

**Bonus Feat:** Swallows are particularly adept at the techniques of the graceful swallow school of martial combat. At 1<sup>st</sup> level, a swallow receives the Combat Artist feat and either the Shadow of the Falcon feat or the Talon Strike feat as bonus feats. Additionally, at 4<sup>th</sup> level, and every 4 levels thereafter, he gains an additional graceful swallow feat as a bonus feat. He must still meet all prerequisites necessary to gain the chosen feat.

**Graceful Swallow Style (Ex):** As experts in the graceful swallow style, swallows are better at using these techniques and stances than their peers. Beginning at 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the swallow is treated as though he had more graceful swallow technique feats than he actually possesses for the purposes of feats and abilities that rely on the number of graceful swallow technique feats he possesses. For every two graceful swallow technique feats the swallow possesses, he is treated as though he possesses one more graceful swallow technique feat for the purposes of such feats and abilities.

Signature Technique (Ex): A swallow becomes more adept at using technique feats as he increases in skill. At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, and every 3 levels thereafter, the swallow gains one of the following feats as a bonus feat: Improved Bull Rush, Improved Dirty Trick, Improved Disarm, Improved Drag, Improved Grapple, Improved Overrun, Improved Reposition, Improved Steal, Improved Sunder, and Improved trip. At 12<sup>th</sup> level, he can also select from the following list: Greater Bull Rush, Greater Dirty Trick, Greater Disarm, Greater Drag, Greater Grapple, Greater Overrun, Greater Reposition, Greater Steal, Greater Sunder, and Greater Trip. The swallow can gain feats from the first list even if he does not meet the prerequisites, but cannot gain feats from the second list unless he has met all of the prerequisites for that feat.



**Graceful Mastery (Ex):** As a swallow continues to practice his techniques and skills, he learns to perform graceful swallow techniques more easily than other creatures. Beginning at 5<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the swallow uses a graceful swallow technique feat, he needs to spend 1 less martial action point to do so than he otherwise would. This cannot reduce the cost below 1 point. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, and every 5 levels thereafter, the cost is decreased by an additional martial action point.

**Swallow's Defense (Ex):** A swallow is better able to defend himself against combat maneuvers. Beginning at 7<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the swallow uses a graceful swallow technique, he gains a bonus to his CMD equal to the number of graceful swallow technique feats he possesses until the beginning of his next turn.

**Swallow's Dodge (Ex):** A swallow is exceptional at fighting off his foes while wearing light or no armor. Beginning at 11<sup>th</sup> level, as long as the swallow is wearing light or no armor, he gains twice the usual amount of Dexterity bonus to his AC.

**Darting Swallow (Ex):** A swallow is such a master of maneuvers that he can perform them at blinding speed, allowing him to perform many more in a short time than an ordinary creature. At 13<sup>th</sup> level, a swallow can perform any combat maneuver that requires a standard action as part of making a full-attack action, in place of making a melee attack. A combat maneuver made in this way follows all the same rules for a combat maneuver which could ordinarily be substituted for an attack roll.

**Deft Recovery (Ex):** When he focuses on the basics on which all graceful swallow techniques are based, the swallow is able to recuperate his focus. Beginning at 14<sup>th</sup> level, whenever the swallow uses a combat maneuver which is not made as part of a martial action technique, if the combat maneuver is successful, he recovers a number of martial action points equal to his Intelligence modifier.

**Blinding Speed (Ex):** A swallow can perform maneuvers so quickly that no one can possibly react to them. Beginning at 17<sup>th</sup> level, the swallow never provokes attacks of opportunity when performing a combat maneuver. This applies only to the actual maneuver, and not to other effects which occur as part of the maneuver (*for example, the movement made as part of a bull rush attempt made while charging might still provoke attacks of opportunity, due to the swallow exiting a creature's threat range*).

**Deadly Swallow (Ex):** A swallow delivers maneuvers with such force as to be potentially lethal. At 19<sup>th</sup> level, whenever a swallow successfully performs a combat maneuver against a creature, he deals an amount of damage to the target equal to 1d6 + his Strength modifier. This damage is subject to damage reduction, and is treated as being of the same type(s) as the weapon that the swallow uses to perform the combat maneuver, if any.

#### Playing a Swallow

Swallows are civilized fighters who epitomize the ideals of grace and gentlemanly conduct. They are also very well known for their arrogance, hubris, and often abrasive and overly aggressive attitudes. Though most swallows are reluctant to kill without reason, that doesn't mean they don't frequently start fights and get into other trouble, and they often bring their friends and allies with them.

Swallows view the world as a series of opportunities to prove themselves as the best and to benefit from all the good things that come along with that position. The swallow thrives on attention and enjoys nothing so much as receiving recognition (particularly from his vanquished opponents) for his exceptional prowess.

**Races:** Nearly all swallows are humans or half-elves who find the lifestyle and skills of the graceful swallow martial school to complement the desires of their heart. Both races are well suited to the path, due to their generally charming personalities, extra feats, and penchant for arrogance. Elves occasionally choose the path of the swallow, feeling their style of combat to be the most elegant and beautiful. Dwarves and half-orcs tend to consider the style to be weak and cowardly, and also less useful in the war-like environments those races tend to hail from. Many halflings and gnomes would find a greater interest in becoming swallows, were it not for their natural weakness in using combat maneuvers.

**Religion:** Swallows have a wide variety of religious practices, depending on the individual. Some swallows choose the path because it provides them a good means to make a difference in a world full of conflict, while minimizing bloodshed. These often worship gods of mercy or pacifism. Others, in it strictly for the fortune and glory, typically worship gods of luck or skill. Still others worship deities of strength or warfare. Whatever the case, religious fervor tends to run very low in the swallow ranks, who look at the world in a more material fashion.

**Other Classes:** Swallows greatly enjoy the company of other adventurers and realize that they can help in nearly any situation, thus spurning no companions for reasons of class. Swallows find other

warrior classes to be useful in mopping up the foes who don't want to surrender after the swallow has thoroughly disabled them. They like rogues who can deal with traps, which all the maneuvers in the world can't disarm, and who are adept at finding treasure. They find healers invaluable due to their poor armor and often substandard hit points. Mages are great for dealing with things off the ground or far away, which are anathema to the swallow's up-close and personal fighting style.

#### Swallows in the World

"Who was that man? He was just so handsome... did you see the way he disarmed that drunk merchant guard and then knocked the ogre mercenary on his back side? I thought I would die laughing. And my, what a tip! Sure, I watched him take the silver necklace from that lady, but she had a bad attitude, and anyway, it looks better on me, don't you think?"

#### ~Tessa, Tavern Maid

Swallows are true showoffs, longing for the attention and recognition their skills surely command. They almost all turn to the adventurer's life after learning the basics of their chosen style, a thing most often studied in academies prior to adulthood, and most prefer to perfect their craft on the road. Even when a swallow does settle down, perhaps teaching others or opening a bar, the tendency to show off never really goes away, and swallows never seem to do more than semi-retire from the adventurer's lifestyle.

**Daily Life:** Swallows spend a lot of time in taverns, inns, dives, and anywhere else excitement is likely to be found. Some nights they merely have a drink and flirt with the bar maids, but every now and then, that one moment every swallow waits for comes into the tavern, that opportunity for adventure and excitement, often paired with far too much danger. Not that this encompasses all that swallows do, of course: some are merchant guards, some join the local garrison, some sign on with ships or turn to piracy, and some are even found among the noble houses of their homelands. Many swallows are eager to display their skill at combat (and so increase their reputation), and so will manufacture fights and other

situations, demanding duels of honor over trumped-up, or entirely staged events, just for a chance to show off before a crowd.

**Notables:** Nearly all swallows want to be notable. Tragically, few swallows ever actually achieve the notoriety they desire, beyond the local places where they were most active during their adventuring days. A great many swallows die before achieving even this level of notoriety, after allowing their arrogant attitudes to put them in over their head. Still, a few have risen to relative greatness.

Francis Merbot is considered by many to be the greatest swallow since Michael Hornswallow, though very few people speak of him with the same reverence. After graduating the Red Swallow Academy in his relatively obscure homeland of Unam, Francis stole his father's money, robbed the local duke, and looted the church, all so that he could purchase a ship and enough scallywags to pilot it out to open sea. In the time since, Merciful Merbot (as he has come to be known) has become famous for being the most ruthless and successful pirate to never kill a man. The captain's reputation for plunder has, in itself, made the prospect of trade in that region dicey at best, and all who travel the western seas know they might run afoul of the dreaded pirate.

The graceful swallow style was founded in antiquity, being one of the oldest martial styles since the early development of combat artistry. The style was officially formalized and founded by Roger Harris, a beautiful and kind man by all regards. Roger had been fighting duels for years, though it is said he never took a life (his foes all allegedly surrendered after witnessing his greatness), and he had learned all there was of combat maneuvers and elegant fighting. It was a civilized time for the world, and people from far and wide came to learn from him. It wasn't long before Roger had enough students to form a school, and then enough expert students to teach those less talented, and so he founded academies throughout the lands. Within a few generations, the techniques had been adopted in one form or another throughout the world, keeping his legacy alive. One unique fact about the graceful swallow style is that no philosophy is taught along with the techniques, as Roger believed that the philosophy behind his style of combat was inherent to the techniques, and that it was the right of

every individual to do with his knowledge what they would.

**Organizations:** Beyond academies where the style is taught, few organizations exist between swallows. Instead, the relationship between one swallow and another tends to be fueled by intense rivalry, which is as often friendly as not. Everything, from where the two swallows were trained, to which techniques they specialize in, to the company they keep and the deeds they have to their name, is used by the two swallows to measure each other prior to what is almost an inevitable duel, which only ends when one swallow surrenders to the other.

NPC Reactions: Swallows tend to either elicit feelings of awe and adoration or disgust and revilement from others. All swallows have big personalities and some people can appreciate that, while others can't. Most swallows would be better off if they were better at realizing when to brag and run their mouth and when to keep quiet, however, and they tend to find themselves in trouble more often than not.

**Swallow Lore:** Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) can research swallows to learn more about them. When a character makes this skill check, read or paraphrase the information from the table below, including the entries for lower DCs.

#### **DC** Information

- 10 Swallows are warriors who specialize in the graceful swallow school.
- 15 Swallows are daring warriors, equal parts grace and power, who excel at using combat maneuvers.
- 20 Swallows rarely back down from a challenge, and often use combat as a means to show off. They are well known for rarely fighting to the death.
- 25 Powerful swallows are masters of many different kinds of combat maneuvers, and can even deliver them with such accuracy that they damage their target at the same time.
- 30 Characters who achieve this level of success can learn important details about specific swallows, the areas in which they operate, the activities they undertake, and so on.



#### Feats

The following section provides a number of new feats which can be selected by any character. These feats provide the backbone of martial techniques, and are the main source of such techniques for most characters.

#### **Technique Feats**

Nearly all of the feats in this book are technique feats. This new category of feats is specifically for martial techniques. All technique feats are combat feats, and provide a character with a way to spend martial action points in order to gain some kind of benefit. Some feats require that a character possess a certain number of technique feats as a prerequisite, and some of the archetypes presented later in this book grant bonus technique feats. Otherwise, technique feats are no different than other feats.

#### New Feats

Unlike most books that provide new feats, the following feats are not presented in alphabetical order. Instead, they have been divided into subsections based on the combat discipline they are associated with (Flowing River, Golden Soul, Graceful Swallow, Infinite Shadow, and Iron Ram). Within these subsections, they are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest. This is also the order that they are presented on the various tables that summarize these feats.

#### **Flowing River Feats**

The following feats are techniques associated with the Flowing River discipline of martial action. The Flowing River discipline focuses on mobility, flitting about the battlefield to get where they are needed, surprising opponents by striking them from places that they are unexpected, and nimbly dodging attacks made against them. The feats are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest.

#### Flowing Forward [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

Your body is a well-honed tool, and by focusing solely on movement, you can surge forward with impossible alacrity, closing the distance between you and your foes in an instant.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the flowing forward martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 1 martial action point in order to move up to twice your movement speed. While moving in this fashion, you can move at your full speed while climbing, swimming, or performing acrobatics (although you may still need to succeed on an Acrobatics, Climb, or Swim check).

#### Tactical Advancement [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

The key to victory in any combat often comes down to outmaneuvering your enemies, and you have mastered special movements and stances to maximize the advantages granted by repositioning yourself. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the tactical advancement martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, you may move up to your speed. At the end of this movement, you gain a +1 bonus on all attack and weapon damage rolls made against creatures you are adjacent to until the end of your next turn. When your base attack bonus reaches +5, and every 4 points thereafter, you may spend an additional martial action point when using this technique in order to increase the damage granted by this feat by an additional +1.

#### Whitewater Stride [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

Like raging whitewater rapids, you rush forward at incredible speeds, surging across the battlefield too fast for your foes react.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the whitewater stride martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend any number of martial action points in order to

Feats	Prerequisites	Benefits
Flowing Forward	Martial action pool, base attack	Move up to twice your speed as a move action, and use
Flowing Forward	bonus +1	Acrobatics, Climb, and Swim at full speed.
Tactical Advancement	Martial action pool, base attack	Move up to your speed, then gain a bonus on attack and
	bonus +1	damage rolls.
Whitewater Stride	Martial action pool, base attack	Increase your speed, and treat foes as flat-footed if you
whitewater stride	bonus +2	move 40 feet.
	Martial action pool, base attack	Move up to your speed and overrun as a move action, then
Storm Stomp	bonus +3	gain a bonus on attack rolls if you successfully overran
	001103 13	anything.
Tidal Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	Attack an opponent, then move away without provoking
	bonus +5	an attack of opportunity
Rushing River	Martial action pool, base attack	Move up to 30 feet. If you move through an opponent's
	bonus +6	square, you can attack them as a free action.
Drifting Boulder	Martial action pool, base attack	Move 10 feet, then, if flanking an opponent, you gain
	bonus +8	bonuses on your next attack.
Steel Torrent	Martial action pool, base attack	Move twice your speed, then gain a bonus on attack rolls
	bonus +10	based on how far you moved.
Wicked Whirlpool	Martial action pool, base attack	Move up to your speed and force opponents to attack you,
Wiened Winnipoor	bonus +12	although they suffer a stiff penalty.
Liquid Iron	Martial action pool, base attack	Make multiple attacks at any point of your movement
	bonus +15	while moving.
Steps of Wisdom		Take three 5-ft. steps as a standard action, and regain 15
	bonus +18	martial action points.
Endless Ocean	Martial action pool, base attack	Immediately take 5 move actions.
Linareos Occuir	bonus +20	initial and phote actions.

#### Table 2-1: Flowing River Feats

increase your movement speed by 5 feet per martial action point spent this way, for a number of rounds equal to the number of Flowing River technique feats you possess. Additionally, during this time, whenever you make an attack, if you have moved at least 40 feet since the beginning of your turn, the target is treated as flat-footed for the purposes of that attack.

#### Storm Stomp [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

With great leaping steps, you tromp across the battlefield, rushing down lesser foes as you streak towards your target and gather momentum for a big swing.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the storm stomp martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 3 martial action points. If you do you may move up to your speed. During this movement you may make overrun combat maneuvers as a free action. At the end of the movement, you gain a +1 morale bonus to attack rolls made before the end of your next turn

for each creature you successfully overran during the movement, and a +1 moral bonus to AC for each creature which chose to avoid your overrun attempt during the movement.

## **Tidal Strike [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]**

Like an ocean wave, you strike your opponent as you withdraw from his presence, delivering a potent blow while evading danger.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the tidal strike martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 5 martial action points. If you do, make a single attack at your highest base attack bonus against a foe within reach. If you hit, you deal damage as normal, and that creature cannot make an attack of opportunity against you for moving out of a square that he threatens until the beginning of your next turn. Regardless of whether or not the attack was successful, you may then move up to your speed in a straight line away from the target of the attack.

#### **Rushing River [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]**

Like a cascading torrent of water raging down a mountainside, you burst forward, letting nothing stop your progress and drowning those who would dare stop you in a flood of steel and blood.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the rushing river martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 6 martial action points in order to move 30 feet in a straight line. If you successfully use Acrobatics to pass through a square occupied by an opponent as part of this movement, you may immediately make a melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against that creature as a free action made as part of the movement. You suffer a -2 penalty to attack and damage for the purposes of this attack roll. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal.

#### Drifting Boulder [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

You glide gently, repositioning yourself with ease and taking aim at your opponent's weak spots, exploiting his new position to great effect.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +8.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the drifting boulder martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 4 martial action points. If you do, you may move up to 10 feet without provoking attacks of opportunity due to movement. If you are flanking an opponent at the end of your movement, you may spend an additional 4 martial action points as a free action in order to make a melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against that creature. If the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal. Additionally, until the end of your next turn, any attack made against that creature by creatures that are flanking it deals an additional 1d6 points of damage. Creatures immune to precision-based damage are also immune to this extra damage.

#### Steel Torrent [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

You stream forward across the field whilst performing an intricate dance of swords and fury, surrounding



#### yourself in a cloak of death.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +10.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the steel torrent martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 5 martial action points. If you do, you may move up to twice your speed. At the end of this movement, you may spend an additional 5 martial action points in order to focus the energy of the movement, granting you a circumstance bonus on the next attack roll you make before the end of your next turn. This bonus is equal to 1/10th the number of feet between the square you were in when you activated this ability and the square where you ended your movement. Use the shortest possible distance between the two points in order to calculate this difference.

#### Wicked Whirlpool [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

With a deadly and graceful dance, equal parts inspiring and mocking, you force foes into attacking you with little hope of dealing any real damage. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +12.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the wicked whirlpool martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 12 martial action points. If you do, you may move up to your speed. During this movement, each opponent who can make an attack of opportunity against you must do so if able, though he suffers a

penalty on the attack roll equal to 1/2 the number of Flowing River technique feats you possess. Additionally, at the end of this movement, each opponent who failed to hit you with his attack of opportunity finds himself stunned by your impressive movement, and must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + the number of Flowing River technique feats you possess) or be staggered for 1 round.

#### Liquid Iron [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

Not only have you mastered movement around the battle field, you have learned how to best position yourself in order to deliver the most potent blows **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15.

Benefit: You gain access to the liquid iron martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, the next time you move this turn for any reason, you may spend 5 martial action points at any point during the movement in order to make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against any creature you threaten. If you hit, you gain a bonus on the damage roll equal to the number of Flowing River technique feats you possess. You may spend martial action points to make an attack in this way any number of times during your movement (provided you have enough martial action points and do not exceed the number of martial action points you can spend in 1 round), but each such attack must be made from a different square, and each attack after the first suffers a cumulative -5 penalty to the attack roll.

#### Steps of Wisdom [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

You have learned that, sometimes, small steps lead to the most overwhelming victories.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the steps of wisdom martial action technique. As a standard action, you may take up to 3 five-foot steps. These steps cannot overlap with each other, nor can you retrace your steps. For each five-foot step you take in this way, you regain 5 martial action points. You must wait at least 10 rounds between uses of this ability. For every two Flowing River technique feats you possess, the amount of time you must wait between uses of this ability is reduced by 1 round.

#### Endless Ocean [Combat, Technique, Flowing River]

Like the great sea, you are constantly flowing forth in an endless wave of martial prowess and frenetic energy.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the endless ocean martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately take 5 move actions. The martial action points spent to activate this ability do not count against the number of martial action points that you can spend in a single round.

#### Golden Soul Feats

The following feats are techniques associated with the Golden Soul discipline of martial action. The Golden Soul discipline focuses on improving the self, and its philosophy is that anyone who can master his own inner being and come to perfect harmony with himself, cannot be defeated in combat. Its techniques empower their user, if executed correctly. The feats are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest.

#### Gilt Swing [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

You strike from a defensive position, protecting yourself from harm and using the blow delivered to hamper the target's offense.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the gilt swing martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, you gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC for 1 round. Additionally, until the beginning of your next turn, any creature that successfully hits you with a melee attack becomes distracted by your defensive stance, and suffers a
#### Table 2-2: Golden Soul Feats

Feats	Prerequisites	Benefits
Gilt Swing	Martial action pool, base attack	You make a single attack, gain a dodge bonus to AC, and
	bonus +1	may impose a penalty to attack rolls on the target.
Golden Focus	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack, and gain a bonus on all melee
	bonus +1	attacks made until the end of your next turn.
Fluid Body	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack, and possibly gain a bonus on
	bonus +2	attack rolls for attacks of opportunity.
Golden Soul Attack	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack, and gain a bonus on all melee
Golden Soul Attack	bonus +3	attack rolls for 1d4 rounds. Multiple instances stack.
Parrying Swing	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack, and gain a +4 dodge bonus to
	bonus +5	AC for 1 round.
Meditations of Harmony	Martial action pool, base attack	Gain a bonus on saving throws for 1 round equal to the
	bonus +6	number of martial action points spent.
Focused Soul	Martial action pool, base attack	For 1 minute, your martial action techniques deal
	bonus +8	additional damage based on the number of Golden Soul
		feats you possess.
Strike From the Spirit	Martial action pool, base attack	Add your Wisdom modifier to attack and damage rolls.
F===	bonus +10	
Embrace the Essence	Martial action pool, base attack	When you use Golden Soul techniques, you can spend
	bonus +12	additional martial action points for bonuses to attack and
		damage.
Martial Meditation		Gain a number of temporary martial action points equal to
	bonus +15	twice the number you spend on this technique.
Perfect Defense		Gain a bonus to AC and saving throws equal to the number
	bonus +18	of Golden Soul techniques you know.
Perfect Offense	Martial action pool, base attack	Gain a bonus to attack and damage rolls equal to the
	bonus +20	number of Golden Soul techniques you know.

cumulative -1 penalty on further attacks made against you until the beginning of your next turn.

## Golden Focus [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

You center yourself, drawing on the contemplative skills of the Golden Soul in order to deliver an attack that harnesses that focus, making you even more deadly.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the golden focus martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, you gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls made before the end of your next turn. Additionally, you may make a single melee attack against a target within reach; if the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal and the bonus to attack rolls made before the end of your next turn increases to +2.

## Fluid Body [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

By concentrating on your own movement, your technique becomes fluid like melted gold and can cause terrible wounds to the unwary, just as surely as the molten metal.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the fluid body martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 2 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal, and assume a deadly, fluid stance which grants you a bonus to attack and damage rolls made as part of attacks of opportunity until the beginning of your next turn. This bonus is equal to the number of Golden Soul technique feats you possess.

#### Golden Soul Attack [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

By focusing your whole attention on your breathing and your muscles, you deliver a deadly attack designed to activate the core of your body and provide a small, short-term burst to your physical attributes. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the Golden Soul attack martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 3 martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack hits, you deal damage as normal, and gain a + 1 bonus to attack and damage rolls for 1d4 rounds. Multiple uses of this technique stack, increasing the bonus to attack and damage for each subsequent hit, and setting the duration for all such bonuses to the result of the latest d4 roll.

## Parrying Swing [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

Turning like a whirlwind, you bring your weapon overhead and then drop it low as you step forward, attacking your opponent and using the momentum of the attack to better defend yourself from the target's future attempts to retaliate

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the parrying swing martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 5 martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack hits, you deal damage as normal, and you gain a +4 dodge bonus to AC for 1 round. If the attack misses, you may repurpose the additional momentum to defend yourself by spending 2 additional martial action points as a free action. If you do, you still gain the +4 dodge bonus to AC for 1 round. When your base attack bonus reaches +10, and every 5 points thereafter, the dodge bonus granted by this ability increases by +2 (this applies whether the dodge bonus is free or paid for with additional martial action points).

## Meditations of Harmony [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

You understand the intrinsic relationship between

#### mind and body and are able to use martial arts in order to focus your mind and body in order to become more resilient.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the meditations of harmony martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend any number of martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal and gain a resistance bonus to all saving throws equal to the number of martial action points spent this way until the beginning of your next turn.

## Focused Soul [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

The meditative techniques of the Golden Soul school of combat artistry teach you how to focus on your body and your weapon, viewing the two as one and allowing you to focus on your physical nature and deliver far more potent martial techniques than those with unfocused minds.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +8.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the focused soul martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend any number of martial action points. For the next minute, any martial action technique you use which costs fewer than the number of points you spent using the focused soul martial action technique becomes empowered by your focus. Any weapon attacks made as part of an empowered martial action deal an additional amount of damage equal to 1/2 the number of Golden Soul technique feats you possess. This ability has no effect on techniques that do not allow you to make attacks as part of their effect.

## Strike from the Spirit [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

You focus on your inner self and draw power from within to deliver a mighty blow to your opponent. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +10.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the strike from the spirit martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, whenever

you make a melee attack, you may add your Wisdom modifier as a bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls (minimum +1). This benefit lasts for a number of rounds equal to the number of Golden Soul technique feats you possess.

#### Embrace the Essence [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

Focus is the essence of the Golden Soul, and true masters of that school are able to channel their focus to enhance the other techniques of the Golden Soul. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +12.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the embrace the essence martial action technique. As a free action, whenever you use another Golden Soul technique, you may spend 1 additional martial action point. If you do, you gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls made before the beginning of your next turn. For every 4 points of base attack bonus you possess, you may spend an additional martial action point this way. If you do, the bonus to attack and damage rolls is increased by +1 for each additional point spent this way. This bonus to attack and damage rolls stacks with bonuses from all other sources.

## Martial Meditation [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

Your intense study of focus has taught you how to temporarily gain great bursts of martial energy. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the martial meditation martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend any number of martial action points, up to the number of Golden Soul feats you possess. If you do, you gain a number of temporary martial action points equal to twice the number of points spent this way. These martial action points last until the end of your next turn. Additionally, until the end of your next turn, you may spend any number of martial action points per round. You must wait 10 rounds after using this ability before you can use it again. For every two Golden Soul technique feats you possess, the number of rounds you must wait after using this ability before you can use it again is reduced by 1.



## Perfect Defense [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

Your ability to focus allows you to protect yourself from harm by assuming a potent defensive stance. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the perfect defense martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 18 martial action points. If you do, until the end of your next turn, you gain a bonus to AC and all saving throws equal to the number of Golden Soul technique feats you possess. Additionally, when you use this maneuver, you become immune to critical hits and precision-based damage until the end of your next turn.

### Perfect Offense [Combat, Technique, Golden Soul]

Your ability to focus allows you to perform exceptionally deadly attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the perfect offense martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 20 martial action points. If you do, you gain a bonus to all attack and weapon damage rolls equal to the number of Golden Soul technique feats you possess. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

## Graceful Swallow Feats

The following feats are techniques associated with the Graceful Swallow discipline of martial action. The Graceful Swallow discipline focuses on outmaneuvering the opponent through deceptive and stylish swordplay, with an emphasis on nonlethal techniques like disarming, tripping, sundering, and so on. The feats are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest.

#### Shadow of the Falcon [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

You flourish your weapon in your foe's face, showing your skill while creating an opening in his guard. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the shadow of the falcon martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, the next combat maneuver you make does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the target of that maneuver. If the target would not normally get an attack of opportunity against the maneuver, instead you gain a +2 bonus on the combat maneuver check.

#### Talon Strike [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

The founding tenets of the Graceful Swallow style involve using skill and expertise rather than pure strength of arms to defeat your opponent, and this basic technique demonstrates how to apply oneself to those aims.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the talon strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, you gain a bonus on all combat maneuver checks you make equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

#### Dance of the Swan [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

The twisting flash of steel hides the devious trick you have planned to cripple your foe.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the dance of the swan martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 3 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack is successful, the target suffers damage as normal, and you may make a dirty trick combat maneuver against that creature as a free action. The target cannot make an attack of opportunity as a result of you making the dirty trick combat maneuver in this way.

#### Autumn Wind Strike [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

With a confidence paramount to the success of your martial action attack, you turn your blade into a whirl of steel and slash at each of your foe's held items, knocking them to the ground with a twist and flourish of your weapon.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the autumn wind strike martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 3 martial action points to make a special disarm combat maneuver check against a target you threaten. You gain a bonus on this check equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess. If the attempt is successful, the target drops all held items, including shields, wands, staves, rods, musical instruments, and weapons, he is currently holding. Using this martial action technique never provokes attacks of opportunity.

#### Broken Wing [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

With grace unbefitting a lesser fighter, you strike at foes' legs, hacking and slashing and causing damage to their joints which makes it difficult to get up after the attack.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: You gain access to the broken wing martial

FeatsPrerequisitesBenefitsShadow of the FalconMartial action pool, base attack bonus +1Avoid provoking an attack of opportunity when making a combat maneuver.Talon StrikeMartial action pool, base attack bonus +1Gain a bonus to CMB equal to the number of Graceful Swallow techniques you know.Dance of the SwanMartial action pool, base attack bonus +2Make a melee attack, and if it hits, make a free dirty trick combat maneuver.
bonus +1 combat maneuver.   Talon Strike Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1 Gain a bonus to CMB equal to the number of Graceful Swallow techniques you know.   Dance of the Swan Martial action pool, base attack Make a melee attack, and if it hits, make a free dirty trick
Talon StrikeMartial action pool, base attack bonus +1Gain a bonus to CMB equal to the number of Graceful Swallow techniques you know.Dance of the SwanMartial action pool, base attackMake a melee attack, and if it hits, make a free dirty trick
bonus +1     Swallow techniques you know.       Dance of the Swan     Martial action pool, base attack     Make a melee attack, and if it hits, make a free dirty trick
Dance of the Swan Martial action pool, base attack Make a melee attack, and if it hits, make a free dirty trick
Dance of the Swan
combat maneuver.
Autumn Wind Strike Martial action pool, base attack Make a special disarm combat maneuver that disarms the
Autumn Wind Strike bonus +3 target of all items he is currently holding.
Martial action pool base attack. Make a special trip combat maneuver that makes it
Broken Wing bonus +5 difficult for the target to get back up.
Martial action pool base attack. Disarm an opponent as he draws a weapon or moves into
Swooping Swallow bonus +6 square you threaten.
As a full round action move up to twice your speed make
Artful Rush
bonus +8 attempts as well.
Martial action pool base attack. Make an enpenent that you bull rushed become stunned
Dizzying Spin bonus +10 for 1 round and then staggered for several rounds.
Autumn Wind Strike Broken Use both the Autumn Wind Strike and Broken Wing
Duelist's Fury Wing, base attack bonus +12 Combat maneuvers as a single standard action.
Martial action pool base attack. Disarm an opponent, make a melee attack against him
Eagle's Lament bonus +15 and possibly prevent him from using his hand.
Martial action pool base attack. Trip an opponent, who takes damage from the fall and
Cacophanous Trip bonus +18 may also fall unconscious for 1 round.
Martial action pool base attack. Make several combat maneuvers as a single standard
Impossible Swing bonus +20 action.

#### Table 2-3: Graceful Swallow Feats

action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 5 martial action points to make a special trip combat maneuver check against a target you threaten. You gain a bonus on this check equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess. If the attempt is successful, the target falls prone and cannot get up from prone for 1d4 rounds unless he succeeds on a Dexterity check (DC 18). Using this martial action technique never provokes attacks of opportunity.

#### Swooping Swallow [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

You strike with improbable speed in order to end your opponent's fighting chances before the battle even begins.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the swooping swallow martial action technique. As an immediate action, whenever an opponent draws a weapon or moves into a square that you threaten, you may spend 6 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately make

a disarm attempt against that opponent. This disarm attempt never provokes attacks of opportunity. You gain a bonus on this disarm attempt equal to 1/2 the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess.

# Artful Rush [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

While some charge forward like bulls, this technique teaches one to twist and leap like a graceful lynx pursuing its prey.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +8.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the artful rush martial action technique. As a full-round action, you may spend 4 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately move up to twice your speed in a straight line. At any point in this movement, you may attempt a bull rush combat maneuver. If you do, you do not provoke an attack of opportunity from the target of your bull rush attempt. Additionally, during this movement you may spend 3 martial action points as a free action in order to make an overrun combat



maneuver. You may do so multiple times, if desired, but must spend 3 martial action points for each such overrun combat maneuver. You gain a bonus on all combat maneuvers made as part of this martial action technique equal to 1/2 the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess.

#### Dizzying Spin [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

You know how to spin your target at the last second as you bull rush him, knocking him off balance and disorienting him long enough for you to deliver the finishing blow.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +10.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the dizzying spin martial action technique. As an immediate action, you may spend 10 martial action points whenever you successfully bull rush a target and cause him to move at least 5 feet. If you do, that creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess) or be stunned for 1 round, and then staggered for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess.

#### Duelist's Fury [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

Screaming a primal cry of elation and triumph, you leap into the air and bring your weapon up from the ground to your head in a whirling crescent knocking into your foes

**Prerequisites:** Autumn Wind Strike, Broken Wing, base attack bonus +12.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the duelist's fury martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 12 martial action points to make a special disarm combat maneuver check against any target you threaten. You gain a bonus on this check equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess. If the attempt is successful, the target drops all held items, including shields, wands, staves, rods, musical instruments, and weapons, he is currently holding. Additionally, the target falls prone and cannot get up from prone for 1d4 rounds unless he succeeds on a Dexterity check (DC 18). Using this martial action technique never provokes attacks of opportunity.

#### Eagle's Lament [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

This technique strikes at the opponent's held items and arms, not only disarming him but possibly disabling him.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15.

Benefit: You gain access to the eagle's lament martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 15 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately make a disarm combat maneuver against a single creature you threaten. If the attempt is successful, you may then immediately make a melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against the same creature. If the attack is successful, the target suffers damage as normal and must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess) or be unable to use that hand, suffering a -4 penalty to Strength and Dexterity for 1d4 rounds. You gain a bonus on the combat maneuver made as part of this technique equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess.

#### **Cacophonous Trip** [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

With a leaping spiral, you unleash a devastating attack at your opponent's legs, knocking him to the ground and possibly rendering him unconscious.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the cacophonous trip martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 18 martial action points. If you do, you may immediately make a single trip combat maneuver. If the trip is successful, you knock the target to the ground with incredible force, dealing an amount of damage to the target equal to 1d4 points of bludgeoning damage for every 2 Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess. Additionally, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess) or be knocked unconscious for 1 round. This technique never provokes attacks of opportunity.

#### Impossible Swing [Combat, Technique, Graceful Swallow]

A true blur of motion, you leap into action, attacking each of your opponent's limbs, as well as his eyes, and sending him flying back while stripping him of his weapons and coin purse all at once

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the impossible swing martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 20 martial action points. If you do, you perform any or all of the following combat maneuvers against a single target: disarm, sunder, steal, dirty trick, bull rush or drag, trip, and/or a grapple. You can choose not to make any of the listed combat maneuvers, but the ones you do perform must be done in the listed order. You gain a bonus on each of these combat maneuver checks equal to the number of Graceful Swallow technique feats you possess.

## Infinite Shadow Feats

The following feats are techniques associated with the Infinite Shadow discipline of martial action. The Infinite Shadow discipline focuses on catching opponents off-guard, and their philosophy is that the best fight is one in which your opponent doesn't even know that he is fighting until after it's all over. Though its critics claim that it is a dishonorable fighting style, its efficacy has ensured that it remains popular. The feats are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest.

### Assassin's Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

You attack from behind while your foe is distracted, virtually ensuring a punishing hit.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the assassin's strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, until the beginning of your next turn, you gain twice the bonus that you would normally receive due to attack rolls as a result of flanking. Additionally, until the beginning of your next turn, all successful attacks you make against flanked opponents (whether you are the one flanking them or not) deal an additional amount of damage equal to 1/2 the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess (minimum +1).

# Shadow Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

With silence and graceful focus, you strike out from the shadows to deliver a killing blow to your enemies, allowing you to place your attack precisely. **Prerequisites:** Stealth 1 rank, martial action pool,

base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the shadow strike martial action technique. As a full-round action, you may spend 1 martial action point in order to make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack hits and the target had been unable to locate you prior to your attack, you deal an additional amount of damage equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess plus the number of sneak

Table 2-4: Infinite Shadow Feats			
Feats	Prerequisites	Benefits	
Assassin's Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	You gain twice the normal bonus from flanking for 1	
	bo <mark>nus +</mark> 1	round, and do more damage to flanked creatures.	
Shadow Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	You make a single attack, which deals more damage if the	
	bonus +1	target was not aware of you.	
Serpentine Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	Attacks you make against entangled, grappled, or pinned	
	bonus +2	characters deal extra damage for 1 round.	
Duskfall	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack, that is more effective if the	
	bonus +3	target is prone or below you.	
Cripplin <mark>g Eye Strike</mark>	Martial action pool, base attack	Attempt to blind a foe, and then make a melee attack	
	bonus +5	against him.	
Slowing Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack. If the target was denied his	
Slowing Strike	bonus +6	Dexterity bonus, he delays, and cannot act right away.	
Viper's Kiss	Martial action pool, base attack	Your attacks provoke attacks of opportunity, but make the	
	bonus +8	target sickened, and potentially worse.	
Shade's Culling	Martial action pool, base attack	You deal additional damage based on how many Infinite	
	bonus +10	Shadow techniques you know to characters suffering from	
	bolids +10	a variety of negative conditions.	
Triangle Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	Your attacks deal only half damage, but if you hit the	
	bonus +12	target three or more times, he is stunned for 1d4 rounds.	
Damnation Strike	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a single melee attack that deals damage as normal,	
	bonus +15	and the target may die if his remaining hit points are low.	
Lethal Shadow	Martial action pool, base attack	Make a melee attack, then immediately make a Stealth	
	bonus +18	check, even if you normally couldn't.	
Ten Bloody Daggers	Martial action pool, base attack	Gain +10d6 sneak attack damage for 1 round.	
	bonus +20	duni Flouo sheuk utuek uundge loi Flound.	

#### Table 2-4: Infinite Shadow Feats

attack dice you possess to the target (so a character with four Infinite Shadow technique feats who also had 5d6 sneak attack dice would deal 9 additional points of damage). Using this ability always reveals you and causes the target to gain a +10 circumstance bonus on Perception checks made to notice you for 1 minute.

#### Serpentine Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

You brutally cleave and rend the flesh of your foes while they are held down or restrained, taking advantage of their compromised state to artfully attack each of their vitals with a quick succession of blows. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the serpentine strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 2 martial action points. If you do, then until the beginning of your next turn, any attacks you make against creatures with the entangled, grappled, or pinned conditions deal an additional amount of damage equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess.

#### Duskfall [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

You allow gravity to do your work for you, plunging your weapon into your foe with incredibly power. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the duskfall martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 3 martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If you attack the target from higher ground, you gain a bonus on the attack roll equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess. If the target of the attack is prone, you gain a bonus on the damage roll equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess. If you attack is prone, you gain a bonus on the damage roll equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess. If you attack from higher ground and the target is prone, both these bonuses are doubled.

### **Crippling Eye Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadowl**

You strike at your foe's eve with your free hand before stabbing him in the gut, all in one whirlwind maneuver.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: You gain access to the crippling eye strike martial action technique. As a standard action, you may spend 5 martial action points. If you do, make a special combat maneuver check against a creature you threaten. If the combat maneuver check is successful, the target is rendered blind for 2d4 rounds. Additionally, when you use this martial action technique, you may make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against the target of this maneuver. You suffer a -5 penalty on the attack roll.

## Slowing Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

You lash out with your weapon before your foes can react to it, slowing them down and knocking them off the pace of combat.

Prerequisites: Martial action pool, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: You gain access to the slowing strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 6 martial action points. If you do, the next successful melee attack you make deals damage as normal, and if the target of the attack was denied his Dexterity bonus to AC for any reason when the attack was made, he becomes disoriented, and cannot react to combat. On his next turn, he automatically delays for a number of initiative points equal to the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess, after which he can re-enter the initiative and may act normally.

## Viper's Kiss [Combat, Technique, Infinite **Shadow**]

You lash out with incredible strength and power, aiming at the target's stomach to cause intense distress.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +8.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the viper's kiss martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 8 martial action points. If you do, until the beginning



your next turn, you may choose to provoke an attack of opportunity whenever you make a melee attack. For each attack that you choose to provoke an attack of opportunity for, if the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal and the target gains the sickened condition for 1d4 rounds. If the target already has the sickened condition when you use this ability, the target instead becomes nauseated for 1 round and any penalties from the sickened condition are doubled for the duration of the effect. These effects are cumulative. When your base attack bonus reaches +12, you may spend an additional 4 martial action points when you use this ability. If you do, you gain the benefits even if you choose not to provoke attacks of opportunity.

## Shade's Culling [Combat, Technique, **Infinite Shadow**]

Like a predatory shadow, you focus on the weakest member of the herd, easily dispatching those who are blind, sick, or otherwise disabled.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus

#### +10.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the shade's culling martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, whenever you make a successful melee attack against a creature who is currently affected by the blinded, confused, cowering, dazed, deafened, disabled, dying, entangled, exhausted, fascinated, fatigued, frightened, grappled, helpless, nauseated, panicked, paralyzed, petrified pinned, staggered, stunned, or unconscious conditions, you deal an additional amount of damage equal to 1d6 per Infinite Shadow technique feat you possess. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn. Creatures immune to critical hits or precision-based damage are immune to the extra damage dealt by this technique.

#### Triangle Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

You attack with an explosion of action, striking the target's pressure points and potentially stunning him. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +12.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the triangle strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 12 martial action points. If you do, then until the beginning of your next turn, whenever you make a successful melee attack, the attack deals only half the amount of damage it would normally inflict, rounded down. If you successfully hit a single creature with 3 or more such attacks before the beginning of your next turn, however, that creature must succeed on a saving throw (DC 10 + the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess) or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. For each attack beyond 3 that you hit the target, he must make an additional saving throw, and the saving throw DC increases by +2.

#### Damnation Strike [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

With an evil smile, you make a single dedicated thrust to the target's vital areas, potentially killing him with a single careful blow.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the damnations trike martial action technique. As a standard action, you

may spend 15 martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus. If the attack hits, the target suffers damage as normal, and after the damage is dealt, if the target has fewer remaining hit points than 4 times the number of Infinite Shadow techniques you possess, the target must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the number of Infinite Shadow technique feats you possess) or instantly die. This technique provokes an attack of opportunity unless you spend an additional 5 martial action points when you use it. This is a death effect.

#### Lethal Shadow [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

With a quick blow at the target's eyes, you provide yourself with enough of a distraction to disappear without notice.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the lethal shadow martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, the next time you deal damage with a melee attack, the target of the attack becomes temporarily distracted and ceases to observe you. You may immediately use the Stealth skill to hide, even if you would not normally be able to. For this purpose, the target of the attack is treated as not observing you.

#### Ten Bloody Daggers [Combat, Technique, Infinite Shadow]

The ultimate technique of the Infinite Shadow allows you to slay your foes with near certainty.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the ten bloody daggers martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 20 martial action points. If you do, until the beginning of your next turn, you gain the sneak attack class feature of the rogue (if you did not already possess it) and the amount of extra damage that you deal on a successful sneak attack increases by 10d6 (for example, a character that did not have sneak attack previously would deal 10d6 points of damage on a successful sneak attack, but one that already had 2d6 sneak attack damage would deal 12d6, etc.).

## Iron Ram Feats

The following feats are techniques associated with the Iron Ram discipline of martial action. The Iron Ram discipline excels at one-on-one combat, and is the strongest technique for duelists and others who can focus on a single opponent. However, for all its overwhelming strength, it lacks finesse, and is difficult to use when facing groups of opponents. The feats are presented in order based on the base attack bonus requirement to select them, from lowest to highest.

### Challenging Strike [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

The basic technique which serves as the basis for all Iron Ram maneuvers engages an opponent in close quarters with an attack designed to occupy his full attention.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the challenging strike martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, then if the next attack that you make before the end of your turn hits, then until the beginning of your next turn, the target suffers a -1 penalty on all attack rolls and weapon damage rolls made against targets other than yourself. For every 2 Iron Ram technique feats you possess, the penalty on attack and damage rolls increases by an additional -1.

#### Heat the Anvil [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You place yourself inside your opponent's guard, leaving yourself open to his attacks but making it difficult for him to attack others, and allowing you to get in a good blow of your own.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the heat the anvil martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 1 martial action point. If you do, then if the next attack you make before the end of your turn hits its target, you may commit some of your attention to occupying your foe. If you do, the target gains a +1 bonus on damage rolls made against you until the beginning of your next turn, but suffers a like penalty on all attack

rolls made against creatures other than you for the same duration. When your base attack bonus reaches +4, and every four points thereafter, these bonuses and penalties increase by +1 and -1, respectively. Finally, on the turn after you successfully use this martial action technique, you gain a bonus on the weapon damage roll of the first melee attack you make against the target of this technique, equal to the bonus granted to the target.

#### **Close the Gates [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]**

You strike your opponent with a lethal whirling attack that positions your body to take advantage of the slightest disturbance of your opponent's form and strike him like a coiled snake.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +2.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the close the gates martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 2 martial action points. If you do, the next attack you make before the end of your turn deals damage as normal, but also leaves the target vulnerable, should he attempt to flee. If the attack hits, then until the beginning of your next turn, the first time the target attempts to move away from you (including taking a five-foot step), you may make an attack of opportunity against that creature as a free action. You gain a +2 bonus on the attack and damage roll made as part of this attack. If you have used all of your attacks of opportunity for the round, you may spend an additional 2 martial action points to make this attack of opportunity anyway.

### Lock Horns [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You challenge your foe not with words, but with a charge and a thrust with the whole edge of your weapon, leaving no doubt as to your intentions **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the lock horns martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 3 martial action points. If you do, the next time you use the charge action this round, if the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal and the target of the attack must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + the number

Feats	Prerequisites	Benefits
Challenging Strike	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1	Make a single melee attack. If it hits, the target suffers a penalty on attacks made against creatures other than you.
Heat the Anvil	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +1	As a swift action, force one creature to suffer a penalty on attacks made against others, but a bonus on damage rolls against you. You also gain a bonus on damage rolls against the opponent.
Close the Gates	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +2	Gain the ability to make attacks of opportunity against a fleeing foe, even if he withdraws or makes a 5-ft. step.
Lock Ho <mark>rns</mark>	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +3	The next time you charge an opponent, he must succeed on Will saves or be unable to attack anyone but you.
Iron Parr <mark>y</mark>	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5	You can attempt to parry the attacks of a creature you threaten.
Walls of Iron		Make a single melee attack, and impose a -20 penalty on the target's next attack.
Fall of the Hammer	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +8	The next time you make an attack, the target can attack you first. If he does, your attack automatically hits.
Inescapable Prison	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +10	Move up to your speed as a free action to follow a fleeing opponent.
Duelist's Gambit	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +12	Leave yourself vulnerable to attack, but get an attack of opportunity against each creature that attacks you.
Climb the Mountain	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15	You gain cumulative bonuses to attack whenever you hit a chosen opponent, and he suffers a penalty on attacks made against you.
Charging Ram	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18	When a creature moves within 30 feet of you, you can move up to it and attack it.
Perfect Duelist	Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20	Your attacks against a chosen target deal maximum damage, and you can use Iron Ram techniques for free.

#### Table 2-5: Iron Ram Feats

of technique feats you possess) or fall victim to your challenge, becoming incensed and fighting only you. For a number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus, the target of this technique must succeed on a Will save each round (DC 10 + the number of Iron Ram technique feats you possess) or be forced to attack you to the best of its ability. Even if he succeeds his saving throw, the target suffers a -4 penalty on all attack and damage rolls made against creatures other than you (for the same duration).

#### Iron Parry [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

The skilled duelist not only focuses on offense against his foes, but must also master the art of protecting himself from their attacks.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +5.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the iron parry martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 5 martial action points. If you do, choose a single creature that you currently threaten with a melee

weapon. For as long as you threaten that creature, you can attempt to parry his blows. Once per round, as an immediate action, whenever the target makes a melee attack against you, you may attempt to parry the attack with one of your own. To do this, make an opposed attack roll at your highest base attack bonus. If the result of the opponent's attack roll exceeds the result of your attack roll (and is also higher than your AC), his attack hits and deals damage as normal. If the result of your attack roll is higher than that of your opponent, he automatically misses. If your opposed attack roll exceeds the opponent's roll by 5 or more, you may make an attack of opportunity against that creature (if you have already used all of your attacks of opportunity for the round, you can spend 2 martial action points to make this attack of opportunity anyway). If the target's attack roll exceeds your opposed roll by 5 or more, however, the attack automatically hits, even if the result is less than your AC.

#### Walls of Iron [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You jab your opponent's joints with your weapon, weakening his limbs and making it painful and difficult to attack.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +6.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the walls of iron martial action technique. As a full-round action, you may spend 6 martial action points. If you do, make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against an opponent within reach. If the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal, and the target suffers a -20 penalty on the first attack he makes next round. When your base attack bonus reaches +11, and every 5 points thereafter, you may spend an additional 2 martial action points when you use this ability. If you do, the target suffers a -20 penalty on the first next round. For every 2 additional martial action points spent this way, the target suffers a -20 penalty on an additional attack.

#### Fall of the Hammer [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

This advanced technique of the Iron Ram school of martial combat represents a classical dueling style, trading blows with an opponent one for one. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus

+8.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the fall of the hammer martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 4 martial action points. If you do, whenever you would make a melee attack this round, the target of the attack may choose to make a melee attack against you at his highest base attack bonus as a free action (this does not count against the number of attacks of opportunity he can make this round). If the target chooses to make this attack, your attack automatically hits the target without fail (you still make the attack roll to determine whether or not the attack results in a critical threat). If the target chooses not to make the free attack, resolve the attack roll as normal, but you gain a bonus on the damage roll equal to number of Iron Ram technique feats you possess.

## Inescapable Prison [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You take the time to prepare yourself for your opponent fleeing from you, allowing you to commit to an inescapable defensive position.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +10.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the inescapable prison martial action technique. As a move action, you may spend 6 martial action points. If you do, choose a single creature that you threaten. For as long as you continue to threaten that creature, he has difficulty escaping your presence. Whenever the target of this ability moves away from you (including taking a fivefoot step away), you may move up to that distance in the same direction as the target creature as a free action. You cannot move more than your speed in this way in any given turn. Movement you make as part of this ability never provokes attacks of opportunity, but movement your opponent makes still provokes attacks of opportunity from you and other creatures, as normal.

## Duelist's Gambit [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You shift your stance to be completely open, allowing yourself to be easily struck but maximizing the power and accuracy of your attack.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +12.

Benefit: You gain access to the duelist's gambit martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, you suffer a -4 penalty to AC and all damage rolls made against you gain a +4 bonus until the beginning of your next turn. However, whenever you are attacked by a creature with a melee weapon, you may make an attack of opportunity against that creature (your attack of opportunity is resolved first). You gain a bonus on all attack and damage rolls made as part of such an attack of opportunity equal to the number of Iron Ram technique feats you possess. The benefits of this technique last until the beginning of your next turn. Attacks of opportunity made in this way do not count against the number of attacks of opportunity you can make this round. You may not make more than one attack of opportunity in this way against any given creature each round, unless you spend an additional 2



martial action points for each such additional attack of opportunity. Spending additional martial action points in this way is a free action made when the creature attacks you.

#### Climb the Mountain [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You thrust your weapon forward in an elaborate twisting motion, engaging your opponent with grace and skill.

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +15.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the climb the mountain martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 15 martial action points. If you do, choose a single creature within 30 feet. Whenever you deal damage to the chosen creature this round, you gain a cumulative +2 bonus on all attack rolls made against that creature. Additionally, as long as you threaten the chosen creature, he suffers a -5 penalty on attack and damage rolls made against creatures other than you. These benefits last for a number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus, but if you do not threaten the chosen creature at the end of any of your turns, the benefits immediately cease.

#### Charging Ram [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You prepare for your foe's movement and spring forward with incredible speed, delivering a deadly blow and halting him in his tracks

**Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +18.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the charging ram martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 10 martial action points. If you do, the next time a creature moves a distance of more than 10 feet though any area within 30 feet of you, you may move up to your speed and make a single melee attack at your highest base attack bonus against that creature as a free action which does not provoke attacks of opportunity. If the attack is successful, you deal damage as normal plus an additional amount of damage equal to the number of Iron Ram technique feats you possess, and the target loses all remaining actions this round.

#### Perfect Duelist [Combat, Technique, Iron Ram]

You engage a single opponent in a duel to the death. **Prerequisites:** Martial action pool, base attack bonus +20.

**Benefit:** You gain access to the perfect duelist martial action technique. As a swift action, you may spend 20 martial action points. If you do, select a single creature within 100 feet that you can see. For a number of rounds equal to the number of Iron Ram technique feats you possess, your attacks against that target deal maximum damage (as though you had rolled the highest possible result on all dice associated with the damage roll). Additionally, for the duration of this ability, you may use one Iron Ram technique feat you possess per round without spending any martial action points. For the duration of the effect, you cannot make attacks against creatures other than the target of this ability.

### Appendix 1: Martial Action Basics

The content in this book builds upon concepts that were introduced in *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action.* While this book can be used on its own, the previous installment contains numerous additional feats relating to martial action points and techniques, as well as archetypes for a variety of classes that allow them to make the most out of martial action rules. The following section presents the basic rules for martial techniques that are required to make use of this product. Some of the feats that are referenced in this section do not appear in this book, but instead appear in *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action.* 

#### Martial Techniques

This book introduces a variety of options for characters of all sorts to take special actions in combat. These special actions, referred to as **martial techniques**, allow characters to perform truly impressive—but not quite supernatural—feats of martial prowess, dazzling displays of swordsmanship, death-defying dodges and maneuvers, and similar acts of physical might and skill. This book grants access to martial techniques in two main ways: through technique feats, and through class features from the book's five classes. Future books may present additional means of gaining access to martial techniques.

Martial techniques have a wide variety of effects, and are activated in different ways, as outlined in the description of the feat or class feature that grants access to that particular technique. For example, the powerful demon's fury martial technique (granted by the Demon's Fury feat) is activated as a free action, and allows you to make an additional full attack action the round that you initiate it. By comparison, the Flash Cut feat grants you the ability to use the flash cut martial technique as an immediate action to make an attack of opportunity, but only when a creature enters a square you threaten. At the same time, the thundering charge martial technique (granted by the Thundering Charge feat) does not require any action at all, and is used as a part of a charge action. Other than a general inclination towards extraordinary martial abilities, the only thing that is universal amongst all martial techniques is that they require the expenditure of one or more martial action points.

#### Martial Action Points

Martial techniques are complicated and difficult maneuvers, and even those who have trained and practiced for hours with a given martial technique still aren't able to perform it over and over on command. They are physically and mentally taxing, and it can be difficult to maneuver opponents into the correct position for the technique to be deployed. The way that a given character's ability to perform martial techniques is measured is with a new resource known as **martial action points**.

All martial techniques require that one or more martial action points be spent in order to use them. Any character with access to a martial technique should have access to a **martial action pool**, which determines the maximum number of martial action points that that character can have at any given time. As the character spends martial action points to use martial techniques, he or she loses the same number of points from his martial action pool. If a character does not have enough martial action points in his martial action pool to pay for a given martial technique, he cannot use that martial technique.

Characters can gain martial action pools in different ways, and depending on how they gain their martial action pool, the maximum number of martial action points they can have at any given time may differ. Most commonly, though, the maximum number of martial action points a character can have in his martial action pool at any given time is equal to 4 + his base attack bonus. Certain feats or class features may adjust this number, as well. A character cannot have more than one martial action pool at any given time: if a character would gain a second martial action pool (such as a character who took the Combat Artist feat, and then took his first level of monk, and elected to take the kung fu artist archetype) he uses whichever martial action pool is larger: he cannot draw on both martial action point pools, nor do the two pools "stack."

There is a limit to the number of martial action points that a character can spend in a given turn. By default, this number is equal to the character's base attack bonus, but certain things can adjust this number. Since many of the martial techniques in this book can be used when it isn't the character's turn, it is important to note that this does not reset until the beginning of the character's turn each round (for example, if Jarrick has a base attack bonus of 4, and spend 3 martial action points on his own turn to use the bulldoze martial technique, then he would still have 1 martial action point left. If, before his next turn, a hobgoblin warrior moved up to attack him and he spent one martial action point to use the flash cut martial technique and make an attack of opportunity, he would be unable to spend any more martial action until the beginning of his next turn, and could not use his flash cut martial technique again if another hobgoblin moved up, even if he still had martial action points left. At the beginning of his next turn, this limit would reset, allowing him to spend up to 4 more martial action points.).

#### Gaining Martial Action Points

As a character spends martial action points to use martial techniques, the number of martial action points remaining in her martial action pool dwindles. Luckily, martial action points can be restored relatively easily: by spending 1 minute in quiet, peaceful rest, a character can fully recover all his martial action points, up to the maximum amount allowed by his martial action pool. Performing any strenuous activity or engaging in combat of any kind during this time prevents the character from regaining martial action points, and he must begin the process again. There are other ways to recover or gain martial action points, as well, granted by specific feats or class features.

**Temporary martial action points** function just like other martial action points, except that they only last for a certain amount of time, as specified by whatever effect granted them to the character. Temporary martial action points are usually spent before any non-temporary martial action points that the character may possess, though he can choose to spend his normal martial action points instead, if desired. Any temporary martial action points that have not been spent by the time that they would be lost are wasted. Temporary martial action points do allow a character to have more martial action points at a given time than his martial action pool would normally allow, but do not allow him to spend more martial action points per turn than normal.

#### Martial Techniques and Other Abilities

Most martial techniques require an action to perform, and usually common sense will make it easy to tell whether or not they can be used in conjunction with other actions. For example, the Combat Prowess feat grants you a martial technique that lets you gain a bonus to attack rolls as a swift action, and can be used in conjunction with a full attack, a charge, or just about anything else. By comparison, because the Crippling Blow feat requires a standard action, it cannot be used as part of a full attack action or a charge.

There are some restrictions on combining martial techniques and other abilities, most notably Vital Strike. Any martial technique which does not, in and of itself, grant an attack, may be combined with vital strike. However, the Vital Strike feat (as well as feats like Improved Vital Strike, and similar) cannot be applied to any attack granted by a martial technique.

Similarly, because any martial technique that grants an attack is a special action, rather than a standard attack, martial techniques that grant an attack cannot be used as part of other actions, unless the source of that martial technique indicates to the contrary. For example, you could not use the crippling blow martial technique in conjunction with a spring attack.

## Feats

The following feats originally appeared in *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action*, and have been included in this book for use with it. They are presented in alphabetical order.

#### **Combat Artist (Combat, Technique)**

You seek to master every facet of combat, striving to achieve martial perfection.

**Benefit:** You gain a martial action pool which has a number of martial action points equal to 4 + your base attack bonus. You can use these martial action points in order to perform a number of special actions during combat. The action required to perform a given special action is described in the feat or class feature which gives you access to that particular martial technique. You may never spend more martial action points in a single round than your total base attack bonus, even if you have enough points to do so. You regain any spent martial action points by spending 1 minute meditating and regaining your focus. During this time you cannot perform any strenuous activity. For more information on martial action points and martial action pools, see Martial Techniques, at the beginning of this book.

Additionally this feat grants you access to the focus strike martial technique. As a swift action, you can spend 1 martial action point. If you do, you gain a + 1 competence bonus on all weapon damage rolls until the beginning of your next turn.

#### **Greater Martial Focus (Combat)**

You can perform complicated and taxing martial techniques with seemingly endlessly stamina. **Prerequisites:** Improved Martial Focus, any four technique feats, base attack bonus +11. **Benefit:** The maximum number of martial action points you can have in your martial action pool is increased by +5. This bonus stacks with that provided by the Improved Martial Focus and Martial Focus feats.

#### **Improved Martial Focus (Combat)**

You have a truly great reserve of martial energy, and can execute complicated martial techniques without tiring.

**Prerequisites:** Martial Focus, base attack bonus +6. **Benefit:** The maximum number of martial action points you can have in your martial action pool is increased by +5. This bonus stacks with that provided by the Martial Focus feat.

#### **Martial Focus (Combat)**

You have a greater reserve of martial energy, allowing you to use the warrior's art more effectively than most. **Prerequisite:** Martial action pool.

**Benefit:** The maximum number of martial action points you can have in your martial action pool is increased by +5.

#### **Master Martial Focus (Combat)**

You have an inhuman reserve of martial energy, and performing even the most difficult of martial maneuvers is seemingly effortless for you. **Prerequisites:** Greater Martial Focus, any six technique feats, base attack bonus +16. **Benefit:** The maximum number of martial action points you can have in your martial action pool is increased by +5. This bonus stacks with that provided by the Greater Martial Focus, Improved Martial Focus and Martial Focus feats.



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## What's Your Fighting Style?

It seems that there are really two ways to go about playing Pathfinder and similar d2o games: you can be a spellcaster, and have all kinds of crazy options to choose from, or you can be a more mundane, martial character, and, well...not. Sure, barbarians get rage powers and paladins can smite evil, and if you devote a bunch of feats to it you might get a couple of nifty tricks like two-weapon fighting or spring attacking, but at the end of the day most mundane characters spend their combat rounds doing full attack after full attack, and eventually that gets a little stale.

A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action provided a potential solution to this state of affairs by providing such characters with numerous options for fun, dynamic, and exciting things to do in combat in the form of martial techniques, which allow such characters to make meaningful decisions and unleash fun and exciting (but still decidedly mundane) special attacks, maneuvers, and abilities in combat. The martial action point system gives players a great level of control over how they use their martial techniques, and with over 50 feats granting access to different martial action techniques, there were plenty to choose from.

Like all good things, however, people wanted more of martial action, and that's where *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action II* comes in. This book has everything you need to use the martial action system, even if you don't have the original, and once again provides over 50 new martial techniques, plus no less than 5 full character classes, each of which is associated with a specific style of martial action. Crush any opponent one-one-one with the Iron Ram style, or confuse and disorient him with the Graceful Swallow style. You can outmaneuver foes with Flowing River techniques, or if that's not your style, turn to the Infinite Shadow style to exploit your foe's weaknesses, or the well-rounded and inward-focused Golden Soul style. Whatever your fighting style, *A Necromancer's Grimoire: The Book of Martial Action II* is designed to be able to easily provide value to existing characters of any level, while at the same time rewarding those who devote themselves to martial action.