

RONIN

A ronin is a samurai without a master. Some leave their masters voluntarily, and others are forced out of service. Perhaps the daimyo they once served made unholy pacts with devils in return for influence or power, driving the warrior away rather than compromise his Bushido, his moral code. Or maybe his master fell in glorious battle in defense of his home, and the ronin was unable to protect him. Whatever the reason, a ronin wanders the land as a sellsword or adventurer, seeking a new master and cause to serve.

expect of outlaws and drunkards, although they typically take no pride in the fact. Necessity dictates certain kinds of behavior for once-proud warriors.

Icons: Unlike paladins, ronin rarely serve abstract or faceless beings like the gods. More likely, they find themselves bound to the icons of their former masters, and not always by choice. The Emperor, the Priestess and the Archmage are all likely to accept adventurers with a ronin's talents as part of their machinations. Depending on the path they chose after leaving their masters, a ronin may also know something of the Prince of Shadows or the Crusader.

OVERVIEW

Play Style: A ronin is halfway between a paladin and a ranger. More than capable of dealing damage, they are also strong defenders. Their abilities in a battle come from *ryuha*, or schools of training, since they don't choose new attacks or spells every level.

Ability Scores: As natural defenders, ronin rely heavily on Constitution, while Strength is also important for devastating attacks. Dexterity could also be important, depending on your choice of weapon and armor class.

Ronin gain a +2 bonus to Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity, as long as it isn't the same ability you increase with your +2 racial bonus.

Races: Steam scions that leave their home in the Caves of Steel frequently adopt the mantle of the ronin, as do hollow eyes because of their itinerant nature. Dragonspawn and aasimar by nature are also drawn to the role. Humans are common, and depending on family or social traditions, dwarven ronin aren't unheard of. Rarely, half-orcs and tieflings are also trained in the ways of the samurai, typically from birth to serve powerful families with less than legitimate business interests. When those families fall, the samurai that served them become ronin.

Backgrounds: In addition to traditional backgrounds as elite guards, soldiers, and leaders, ronin are also likely to have experience in less savory activities such as poaching and perhaps even thievery or assassination, depending on where their lives strayed after leaving the service of their original masters. A ronin is just as likely to be found frequenting low-end taverns and pubs as they are to be members of roving gangs of bandits; as such, they may have backgrounds in all the typical skills you'd



GEAR

At 1st level, ronin start with their *daisho*, two swords that are tradition for all trained as samurai. They may also have another melee weapon, perhaps a bo staff or naginata. They are skilled in all manner of ranged weapons as well. For armor, anything goes, from a vagrant's robes to the full heavy armor of the samurai.

Successful ronin that find regular employment start with 25 gp. Less fortunate, though perhaps more typical ronin start with 1d3 x 10 gp.

ARMOR

A ronin can wear any class of armor. As samurai, they train in heavy traditional armor called *ō-yoroi*, but as ronin it is just as likely they've lost or had to sell it and now wear light armor, or even just a traditional kimono. Samurai do not train using shields however, and any ronin choosing to do so takes a penalty to their attack.

Ronin Armor and AC

Type	Base AC	Attack Penalty
None	11	–
Light	12	–
Heavy	15	–
Shield	+1	-2

BASIC ATTACKS

MELEE ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Strength + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Strength damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

WEAPONS

By training and as a matter of tradition, most ronin prefer to use their *daisho* as their primary weapons. However, as a matter course, many ronin are fairly nontraditional. They may see fit to wield a *tetsubo*, or a spear; very few weapons in any category are unfamiliar to a ronin. It's all a matter of their preference, and perhaps their financial means.

A ronin looking to engage from a distance may use a *daikyu* or a *hankyu*, their equivalent of a long and short bow respectively. Also common are small thrown weapons such as axes, knives and shuriken.

Ronin Melee Weapons

One-Handed	Two-Handed
Small 1d4 dagger, tanto	1d6 club
Light or Simple 1d6 wakizashi, hand axe	1d8 spear
Heavy or Martial 1d8 katana, <i>kanabō</i>	1d10 tetsubo, naginata

Ronin Ranged Weapons

Thrown	Crossbow	Bow
Small 1d4 shuriken	1d4 hand crossbow	–
Light or Simple 1d6 kunai	1d6 light crossbow	–
Heavy or Martial 1d8 throwing axe	1d8 hankyu	1d8 daikyu

RANGED ATTACK

At-Will

Target: One enemy

Attack: Dexterity + Level vs. AC

Hit: WEAPON + Dexterity damage

Miss: Damage equal to your level

Ronin Level Progression

Ronin Level	Total Hit Points	Total Feats	Class Ryuha	Level-up Ability Bonuses	Damage Bonus From Ability Score
Level 1	(8 + CON mod) x 3	1 adventurer	3		ability modifier
Level 2	(8 + CON mod) x 4	2 adventurer	3		ability modifier
Level 3	(8 + CON mod) x 5	3 adventurer	3		ability modifier
Level 4	(8 + CON mod) x 6	4 adventurer	3	+1 to 3 abilities	ability modifier
Level 5	(8 + CON mod) x 8	4 adventurer 1 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 6	(8 + CON mod) x 10	4 adventurer 2 champion	4		2 x ability modifier
Level 7	(8 + CON mod) x 12	4 adventurer 3 champion	4	+1 to 3 abilities	2 x ability modifier
Level 8	(8 + CON mod) x 16	4 adventurer 3 champion 1 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 9	(8 + CON mod) x 20	4 adventurer 3 champion 2 epic	5		3 x ability modifier
Level 10	(8 + CON mod) x 24	4 adventurer 3 champion 3 epic	5	+1 to 3 abilities	3 x ability modifier

Ronin Stats

Initiative, AC, PD, MD, Hit Points, Recovery Dice, Feats, and some ryuha are level dependent.

Ability Bonus	+2 Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity (different from racial bonus)
Initiative	Dex mod + Level
Armor Class (heavy armor)	15 + middle mod of Con/Dex/Wis + Level
Physical Defense	12 + middle mod of Str/Con/Dex + Level
Mental Defense	12 + middle mod of Int/Wis/Cha + Level
Hit Points	(8 + Con mod) x Level modifier (see level progression chart)
Recoveries	(probably) 8
Recovery Dice	(1d10 x Level) + Con mod
Backgrounds	8 points, max 5 in any one background
Icon Relationships	3 points
Ryuha	3 (see level progression chart)
Feats	1 per Level

CLASS FEATURE

All ronin have the Daisho-ryu class feature. *Note:* In order to utilize this feature, you must be wielding the pair of swords that compose the daisho, a katana and wakizashi forged and balanced together. Both hands are required, one for each blade.

DAISHO-RYU

You can use this ryuha once per battle, plus an additional number of times per day equal to your Dexterity modifier as long as you're wielding your daisho.

When attacking with your katana and you score a hit with a natural even number (unless it's a 20,) make a second attack against the same target with your wakizashi. The number of weapon dice you use for the wakizashi's damage is half your level, minimum 1.

Adventurer Feat: Your Daisho-ryu gains a +4 attack bonus.

Champion Feat: Your wakizashi damage die becomes a d8 instead of a d6.

Epic Feat: The number of weapon dice you use for the wakizashi's attack is equal to your level.

CLASS RYUHA

Choose three of the following ryuha.

You get an additional ronin ryuha at 5th level, and again at 8th level.

TETSU-RYU (SCHOOL OF IRON)

Relentless training has made your body as hard as a well forged shield. You gain +1 AC and +2 PD.

In addition, once per battle when hit by an attack, force the enemy to reroll and use the lower of the two rolls.

Adventurer Feat: If the attack still hits, you only take half damage.

Champion Feat: The enemy takes a -2 penalty to the reroll.

Epic Feat: The enemy takes a -4 penalty to the reroll.

KATAKI-RYU (SCHOOL OF THE ADVERSARY)

You've learned to focus your mind and spirit like the blade of a finely honed sword. As a free action once per battle, identify one enemy as your adversary.

That enemy is now vulnerable to your attacks.

Adventurer Feat: Adversary takes a -2 penalty to disengage checks with you.

Champion Feat: Adversary takes a -4 penalty to any attacks that don't target you.

Epic Feat: You can target two enemies as adversaries.

OKAMI-RYU (SCHOOL OF THE WOLF)

Learning from the wild hunting wolves of the deep wood, you know the strength of the pack. Gain a bonus to attack rolls equal to the number of additional party members engaged with your target, to a maximum of 3.

Adventurer Feat: As long as the target remains engaged with at least you and one other party member, it is vulnerable to you.

Champion Feat: You gain an equal bonus to AC as well.

Epic Feat: When you encounter wolves or other canids in combat, they will not fight you, and will in some instances actually aid you.



HYOU-RYU (SCHOOL OF THE PANTHER)

Like a stalking jungle cat, the swiftness with which you move makes it impossible for your prey to completely avoid your attacks. Once per day plus a number of times equal to half your Dexterity modifier, a missed melee attack does half damage.

Adventurer Feat: This ryuha applies to ranged attacks as well.

Champion Feat: This ryuha can now be used to counter-attack once per day.

Epic Feat: Staggered enemies take full damage.

MIZU-RYU (SCHOOL OF WATER)

Like a mighty river, your attacks are fluid and not easily diverted. +1 to PD and MD.

Once a day, reroll a missed attack roll with a +2 bonus. You must use the second result.

Adventurer Feat: The reroll bonus becomes a +4.

Champion Feat: You can use this ryuha a number of times per day equal to your wisdom modifier.

Epic Feat: If the attack hits on the reroll, do an additional 4d8 damage.

KA-RYU (SCHOOL OF FIRE)

Your attacks are as violent and destructive as a raging flame. Once per day when you hit with a melee attack, add 2d6 fire damage to the damage roll.

Adventurer Feat: This ryuha applies to ranged attacks as well.

Champion Feat: The extra damage becomes 2d10 instead of 2d6.

Epic Feat: You can use this ryuha once per battle.

TATSU-RYU (SCHOOL OF THE DRAGON)

Special: Unlike other ryuha, this ryuha takes up two ronin class ryuha slots.

You are a student of the oldest and deadliest of schools of combat. Increase your weapon dice for both melee and ranged weapons one value (i.e., a d4 becomes a d6, a d6 becomes a d8, etc.)

Adventurer Feat: On any natural 16+ attack roll, deal an additional 2d4 damage.

Champion Feat: Once per battle, choose an enemy. You're crit range is expanded against that enemy until the end of battle, or until you fall unconscious.

Epic Feat: On even numbered attack rolls, hit or miss, do 4d8 extra damage.

KONRAN-RYU (SCHOOL OF CHAOS)

Your intensive, lifelong training has taught you the value of discipline-- but also of unbridled chaos unleashed on your foes. A true samurai would never surrender to the temptation of such recklessly powerful techniques, but you're not a samurai, are you? You're a ronin, and you have no master.

After every full rest, roll a d4. Once per day, you can add that many d6 to a damage roll one time.

Adventurer Feat: The d4 you roll after a full rest becomes a d6.

Champion Feat: When you use this ryuha, roll a d6. Use the Chaotic Benefit table below to determine the bonus you receive from using the Konran-ryu.

Epic Feat: Double the number damage dice used for this ryuha, and make them d10s. Before applying the damage to the attack, roll a d8. Use the table below; the attack now does that energy type of damage.

Chaotic Benefit

1–2: You gain a +1 bonus to AC and Physical Defense until the start of your next turn.

3–4: Deal damage equal to your level + your Constitution modifier to all nearby staggered enemies.

5–6: Deal damage equal to your level + your Constitution modifier to one nearby enemy.

Random Energy Type (d8)

1: Cold

2: Fire

3: Lightning

4: Thunder

5: Acid

6: Holy

7: Necrotic

8: Psychic