

The Forbidden Paths

~ Monastic Traditions

The Forbidden Paths are martial and studious practices the pursuit of which has been restricted or outlawed. In some cases, this is because of the dangers the techniques pose to the practitioner and those around them, in others the knowledge is kept secret by an elite caste or order.

The Demon's March

Monks of the Demon's March are unique in their approach to ki-energy. While most traditions praise the *flow* of ki, and embrace a lifestyle that matches this idea of peaceful and seamless transition, these warriors draw more strength from more adversarial sources. The ki-energy that monks of the Demon's March draw on is often seen as harsh or stagnant, it rises from societal conflicts great and small, and from destructive natural phenomenon.

Monks of these traditions are coarse-mannered or outright indulgent. They shirk societal customs, and are often drawn to places and events of upheaval, where the 'flow' of their ki is strongest.

Demon's Fist

At 3rd level, on your turn, when you make an unarmed attack, you may spend 1 ki point as a bonus action to activate the Demon's Fist, transforming your hand into a claw-like

appendage. Your next attack with the Fist deals Martial Arts Die plus double your Wisdom modifier damage, and you gain half the total damage as temporary hit points until the start of your next turn.

If you miss with Demon's Fist, the effect remains until you land a successful attack, or dispel it as a free action.

Demon's Fire

At 6th level, when you spend a ki point to enact Patient Defense or Step of the Wind, all enemies who make attack rolls against you while in melee range automatically take fire damage equal to your Dexterity modifier. This effect ends at the start of your next turn.

Demon's Wrath

Starting at 11th level, you can spend 2 ki points to cast *Hex*, or 3 ki points to cast *Flame Blade*. *Flame Blade* counts as a monk weapon for you when cast this way.

Demon's Pride

At 17th level, whenever you are targeted by an attack in melee range, you may use your reaction to make an unarmed attack against the offending enemy. If the attack lands, you deal an additional damage die of fire damage.

The Emperor's Guardian

Those who guard the Emperor know many strange and esoteric techniques, perfected and kept secret from bloodline to bloodline, dynasty to dynasty. To learn this path, one must be born into service or demonstrate unwavering devotion to the throne and those destined to rule from it. But this does not mean that a loyal guardian is always beside their principle, some who learn this path journey afar to protect the interests of the dynasty.

This path teaches its disciples to relinquish any sense of self-importance, and to embrace a life of service and sacrifice. To signify these core concepts, most guardians eschew independent or unique trappings, instead wearing masks to convey the faceless role they've accepted, or wear the colors of their master's standard.

Sentinel Spirit

Starting at 3rd level, as a bonus action on your turn, you may spend 1 ki point and designate an adjacent ally that you can see. That ally adds your Wisdom modifier to their Armor Class and Dexterity saving throws until the end of their next turn. They lose this benefit if they move to a space that is not adjacent to you.

In addition, you may use the Deflect Missiles feature whenever an adjacent ally is hit by a ranged weapon attack.

Fleet Defender

At 6th level, whenever an ally that you can see within 30 feet is hit by a melee attack, you may use your reaction to teleport to an empty space adjacent to the offending enemy and make an unarmed or monk weapon attack against that enemy.

Watchful Guardian

At 11th level you cannot be surprised unless incapacitated. If you are sleeping naturally when a combat begins, you awaken automatically.

Lord Protector

At 17th level, you may spend 5 ki point as a bonus action to cast *Staggering Smite*, affecting any monk weapon you have equipped including your own hands and feet. The save DC for this spell is your ki save DC.

In addition, whenever an ally within 60 feet of you is reduced to 0 hit points or otherwise incapacitated, you regain 1 ki point.

Teachings of the Jade Dragon

Woven like a spider's web across the world are lines of wild, fey energy, escaped from a dimension of untamed nature and magic.

Legends tell of a clever, cunning dragon with scales of jade, who taught her mortal followers how to access this fey energy.

The path of the Jade Dragon is one found by intuition rather than devotion. Those who tread this path are often glib, passionate, tricky, and temperamental -- perhaps as a result of the wild ki they channel.

Bonus Proficiencies

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency in the Deception and Nature skills if you are not already proficient in them.

Jade Dragon Techniques

At 3rd level, once per turn when you strike an enemy with an unarmed or monk weapon attack, you may spend 1 ki point to add one of the following effects:

- **Sight-Stealer:** The target must make a Wisdom save. If they fail, you appear blurry and intangible to the target, and they suffer disadvantage on their next attack roll against you.
- **Bramble-Fist:** The target must make a Constitution save. If they fail, their skin prickles and burns, and they suffer one damage die of piercing damage for

every 10 feet they move on their next turn. Teleportation negates this effect.

- **Snare-Palm Strike:** The target must succeed a Strength save or be restrained by magical vines until the end of their next turn, at which point the vines wilt.
- **Befuddling Headbutt:** The target must succeed a Constitution save. If they fail, they are confused, per the spell *Confusion*, for one round. A creature affected by this technique cannot be confused this way again for 24 hours.

Scales of Jade

At 6th level, your connection to fey energy has warded you against harmful magic. You have resistance against damage from spells.

Wild Heart

At 11th level, you gain advantage against all mind-altering effects, as well as any attempt to detect your alignment, intent, or emotional state, including Insight checks against you.

Jade Dragon's Lecture

At 17th level, you can spend 3 ki points and breathe a 15 foot cone of poisonous air as an action. All enemies in the cone must make a Constitution save or suffer 5d6 poison damage.

Way of the Reaper

There are some who find their calling in the strife and struggle of war: immersed in strategy, in sync with their enemy, at home with the clashing of blades. Such a path is easily subject to abuses, as the practitioner's strength comes from the taking of life. History bears the bloodstains left by warlords and military empires built with the hands of these warrior-monks. Now their ranks remain thin, kept in check by opposing clans and traditions.

Monks of the Way of the Reaper, often called Slayers or Executioners, find peace in the ebb and flow of battle. They train with large, heavy weapons with which to deliver devastating strikes, taking swift and decisive control of the battlefield.

Killer Instinct

At 3rd level, you gain proficiency with greataxes, greatswords, and mauls, also called Reaper weapons. You gain the following benefits if you are using one of these weapons and are unarmored and not wielding a shield:

- You can use Dexterity in place of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of Reaper Weapons.
- When you are targeted by a melee attack, you may use your reaction to add your proficiency bonus to your Armor Class against the triggering attack.

- When you take the attack action with a Reaper weapon and an attack lands, you may immediately use your bonus action to make a secondary attack against an adjacent opponent. If the attack lands, it deals 1d6 damage plus any bonus damage inherent to the Reaper weapon.

Punishment

At 6th level, whenever an enemy within 5 feet of you misses you with an attack, you may use your reaction to make a Reaper weapon attack against that enemy.

Tenacity

At 11th level, when you are reduced to 0 hit points but not outright killed, you immediately recover hit points equal to your Monk level, and ki points equal to half your Monk level (rounded down). You must finish a long rest before using this feature again.

Storm of Steel

At 17th level, when you hit an enemy with a Reaper weapon attack, you may spend up to 5 ki points to infuse the strike with ki energy. The target must make a Constitution save or take 1d4 force damage and be pushed 5 feet for each ki point infused into the strike.

If you use 5 ki points on a non-magical weapon, the weapon breaks on impact.

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