

JADE REGENT



IRORI

IRORI (IH-ROH-REE) WAS ONCE A MORTAL, A GREAT MAN WHOSE RIGID DISCIPLINE ALLOWED HIM TO ACHIEVE PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SPIRITUAL PERFECTION. IN DOING SO, HE FREED HIMSELF OF THE RESTRAINTS OF MORTALITY AND BECAME A GOD, INSPIRING COUNTLESS OTHERS TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO CHALLENGE THEIR MINDS, BODIES, AND SOULS IN ORDER TO PUSH THE LIMITS OF WHAT THEY THOUGHT POSSIBLE. HE IS A TEACHER WHO LEADS BY EXAMPLE RATHER THAN ISSUING REPRIMANDS AND CORRECTIONS, FOR HE UNDERSTANDS THAT FOR SOME THE QUEST FOR SELF-PERFECTION IS ALMOST EASY, WHILE FOR OTHERS IT IS FRAUGHT WITH PITFALLS AND SETBACKS.

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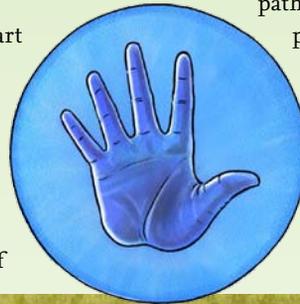
Irori knows that there is no technique that works best for everyone, and each student must experiment and practice to find the method that works best for her. He is patient, forgiving, and serene, welcoming as brothers and sisters all who seek perfection. Meanwhile, he constantly tests his own limits as a deity, expanding his awareness and control without impinging upon the works of others. Originating from distant Vudra, Irori has gained a diverse following, with many people of the Inner Sea coming to embrace the disciplined regimens of the Master of Masters to see them through these troubled times.

Irori's followers rarely depict him in art because they believe that any icon of him cannot hope to live up to his perfect image. They describe him in poetry and prose as a flawless man, with no hair save a long braid, and wearing simple robes and wooden sandals. His race often changes to reflect that of the artist, though artists of the Inner Sea often depict him as being of any number of exotic backgrounds. Irori rarely manifests to mortals, and sees no need to cloak himself in mystery or augment himself with divine power, so in the rare times when he personally appears, his avatar is a physically fit man, looking exactly as his followers describe him, often sitting, kneeling patiently, or resting in a meditative pose. More often, he projects a portion of his awareness into a statue, animating its face and speaking through it.

The Master of Masters teaches that body, mind, and spirit are inexorably linked, that within each individual is a perfect version of these three aspects, called the Triune Self. Mastering all three aspects is the key to achieving perfection and enlightenment. As most have difficulty sensing and refining their own spirits, novices usually prioritize improving the body and the mind, allowing the control gained from these efforts to steer the growth of the spirit. Irori believes that self-awareness leads to discipline, which leads to mastery, while ignorance forces the spirit to repeat its mistakes in the next life. He opposes radical action and extreme changes in habits and behavior, preferring subtle shifts over time to allow a creature to adjust to unfamiliar practices and find a new internal balance. He points to the physical and mental reactions to extreme change as examples of this philosophy: an untrained sprinter who runs for hours on her first day of training risks cramps and injury, and a gluttonous eater who goes on a starvation diet suffers from cravings. Discipline, moderation, and temperance are the keys to creating a lasting change in a person's life; radical

action without proper preparation is chaotic and leads to negative outcomes.

Irori's realm in the Great Beyond is called the Serene Circle—a large, flat, gardenlike space within Axis, broken by footpaths and large rock outcroppings like pebbles scattered by a colossal hand. The few buildings typically resemble Vudrani temples, palaces, or monasteries, though the enlightened claim they can see aspects of all of these structures in each, as if the buildings appear in whatever shape is needed. The god's divine servants walk the paths, discussing philosophy and taking breaks to practice meditation, martial arts, or breathing exercises. Most have been reincarnated dozens of times, aided by Irori in experiencing life anew again and again, refining their souls' fundamental experience and nearness to perfection with each life. The Triune Selves of the enlightened who choose to return to the Material Plane again and again help others find wisdom, often acting as mentors, antagonists, or martyrs. At the god's insistence, Axis's native inevitables and formians are forbidden to enter the Serene Circle, for their alien nature and constant noise is disruptive to the sense of



"TO TRANSCEND YOUR FLAWS, YOU MUST KNOW YOUR INNER SELF. GAINING THIS KNOWLEDGE IS A JOURNEY, AND THE PATH MAY BE STRAIGHT OR TWISTED."

—UNBINDING THE FETTERS

tranquility there. A few fortunate mortals may receive visions of this place, its serenity motivating them to continue their work toward perfection.

Irori is lawful neutral and his portfolio is history, knowledge, and self-perfection. His weapon is the open hand, representing unarmed combat as well as the unlimited potential of mortal life guided by serene intelligence. His holy symbol is an open blue palm overlaid upon a circle, though in some lands his name-rebus (see page 70) is used more often than the hand. His domains are Healing, Knowledge, Law, Rune, and Strength.

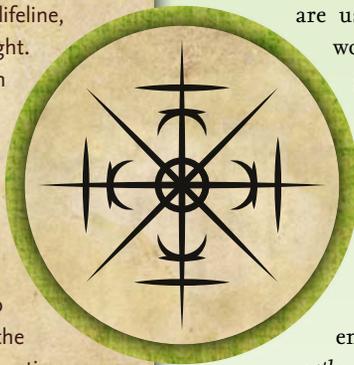
When Irori is pleased, he eases the path toward enlightenment, soothing pain, bestowing mental clarity, and granting insight about the next step in the worshiper's journey. Especially devout followers might see a brief image of the god, his serene eyes, or a mysterious imprint of a sandal where no person has trod. He sometimes punishes transgressions with cramps, fatigue, dizziness, and obvious setbacks in the path to self-perfection. However, in most cases he refrains from these actions, as he believes that if a person is sincere, straying from her ideal path is punishment enough, and for those who are not sincere, it is best they leave the church and pursue other interests. Only in extreme cases—such as with a mortal destined for greatness—does he afflict the person with an injury or disability to overcome,

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THE MASTER'S REBUS

In at least one alphabet, Irori's name can be written to look like a mirror image of itself, and when this image is rotated it creates a starlike pattern. The faithful call this image the Master's Rebus, and say that the lines of the "star" represent knowledge and enlightenment flowing outward from the god to illuminate the Triune Selves of all mortals. The horizontal axis represents the physical self, and on another level it represents a mortal lifeline, with birth on the left and death on the right. The vertical axis represents the mind, with the lower half representing base interests and simple needs such as food, shelter, and sex, and the upper half representing enlightened concepts such as charity, ethics, fellowship, and self-sacrifice. Wise aspirants realize that the rebus has a third dimension, projecting out of and into the surface it is drawn on, representing the spirit, oscillating through positive and negative incarnations until it stabilizes at the perfect center, aligned at the point where the physical and mental rays cross.

Crafting a Master's Rebus, whether by painting it on canvas, carving it from wood, shaping it from clay, or hammering it into copper, is an art form among many temples, and some poorer monasteries supplement donations by selling these creations to pilgrims and other benefactors. Some have a tiny cup at the center to hold a small candle, lit on holy days and representing the spirit axis of the rebus. It is common for a temple to have a rebus mosaic on a floor or wall, and to have a prayer service each morning to trace its lines with sand, ash, or water; the material is allowed to drain or blow away, as a person should strive for perfection every day.



either as a way to give an alternate perspective to a problem or to encourage humility in someone especially prideful.

Irori's primary worshipers are mystics, ascetics, and martial artists—folk who seek to better themselves through meditation, diet, and exercise. Though most of his followers worship him as the god of self-perfection, a significant minority pray to him as a god of history or knowledge, particularly in regard to anatomy, medicine, philosophy, comparative studies of martial arts, and the history of combat and the Vudrani lands. These secondary aspects are more prominent among elder members of the faith and those whose health prevents the rigorous exercise needed to perfect the physical self; these worshipers often become the archivists and lorekeepers of the faith, transcribing oral traditions into lasting forms to ensure the preservation of wisdom that would otherwise be lost.

Rituals in Iroran temples usually involve a period of meditation or prayer, sometimes with a ritualized consumption of particular foods, which varies from region to region or may be unique to a particular monastery. Drums, gongs, rainsticks, and bells are common instruments used to mark time in a ceremony. Monasteries devoted to martial arts may consider practicing their combat forms a kind of ritual prayer. The church does not practice animal or human sacrifice. Physical offerings are usually seeds, bread, rice, sweat from the worshiper's brow, tea, or even folded paper goods shaped like useful objects (such as teapots, flowers, or animals). These objects are burned in a sacred fire that represents the god's spirit.

There is evidence that Irori was an ascetic for a portion of his mortal life, and some of his followers practice varying levels of asceticism in search of enlightenment. Known by the Vudrani word *sathu*, meaning "done well," these religious folk give up material goods and sexual acts to strengthen their connection with the divine. Some sathus live alone in forests, caves, or graveyards, while others live in a temple and are positive examples for aspiring monks. Some wear only rags, some go naked, some paint their flesh, some carry swords, some never cut their hair, some shave or pluck all hair from their bodies—all give up most worldly possessions, but the definition of "most" varies from sect to sect. Sathus are greatly respected among the faithful, even by those who do not practice asceticism, but outsiders may view them with suspicion and believe they can curse people or summon ghosts.

Some enlightened members of the faith, particularly monks, are so aware of their own bodily processes that they can sense their approaching death from old age, knowing in advance the day or even the hour they will pass. A few of these wise folk employ a method of self-mummification, using a diet of poisonous nuts and teas that prevents their corpses from putrefying after death. These masters of life and death leave behind their bodies to watch over Irori's temples, and in some cases these bodies animate as mummies to defend the temple against threats. These dried but perfectly preserved Iroran mummies are extraordinarily rare, and their magical attacks have no effect on Irori's worshipers, but otherwise they have nearly the same statistics as normal mummies.

Among the most devout and most powerful members of Irori's faith, a very rare few have been known to simply disappear from the world, presumably to continue their studies on another physical plane or a higher plane of consciousness (though what exactly that means is a matter of debate even among church elders). This is called "walking with the Master," as if such individuals

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were hand-picked by Irori for a greater purpose, and is considered a great honor. Many of these lucky individuals revisit Golarion decades or centuries later as spirit guides, and at least one has become a divine servant of the god.

TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Iroan temples typically take the form of sprawling complexes, all featuring rooms for prayer, sleep, and exercise, where Irori's faithful study and train in an endless quest to achieve perfection and purify their *ki*, or life-force. Such temples are not generally open to the public, and visitors must wait outside lest their presence disturb the energy of those within. A temple's leader is the resident closest to self-perfection, normally determined through collective meditation but sometimes through combat. In most cases, the leader is a guide rather than a tyrant, though some temples tend to be more aggressive and evil in their outlooks, requiring combat challenges (sometimes of a bloody or even deadly variety) to ascend to higher status.

An increasing number of temples devoted to Irori also train monks, and it is through these temples that the martial arts of distant lands have spread across the Inner Sea region. Such simple temples often gain footholds in oppressive lands where commoners are not allowed to use weapons, for the expert hands of a monk can show a peasant how to disarm a knight or use a farm implement with deadly skill.

Irori's priests have no formal garb other than a long rope of braided hair tied in a loop and worn like a necklace. There is no specific requirement for the hair's origin; some use their own hair, while others use the hair of a mentor or an exotic creature.

Many of Irori's followers are monks, men and women who have dedicated their lifestyles to simplicity and purity in order to perfect their bodies. Others focus instead upon the secrets of the mind, turning their attention inward to perfect their very thoughts. Because Irori teaches that there are many paths to perfection and each individual's path may be slightly different, his followers are a strangely varied lot for a group focused on an identical goal, and come from all walks of life. Followers who rise to the rank of master are said to go to Irori's side to serve him forever when they die, while those who fall short of perfection are reincarnated to begin the journey anew.

A PRIEST'S ROLE

Irori's priesthood consists of clerics and monks in almost equal numbers, with only a few druids involved in the church. Priests are responsible for aiding others on their path to self-perfection, either by guiding followers with the priest's insights or through rigorous questioning and encouragement to provoke a student's revelations upon her own personal path. Even though clerics and druids



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can wear armor, many choose not to so as not to hamper the movement of their bodies—though there is no stigma for wearing armor. The rare druid-priests typically believe civilized folk have become too separated from their natural instincts and extol the emulation of various animals as the most natural way to achieve self-perfection. Iroran priests feel a kinship for ancestor and lore oracles, particularly those cursed with blindness or lameness, and while these oracles are rarely officially part of the church, they are welcome in Irori's temples. Arcane spellcasters occasionally seek out Irori's followers, hoping to find aid in their searches for arcane lore. Such magic-obsessed individuals, however, are regularly disappointed—most find the lore gathered by Irorans too holistic to prove particularly useful, and thus are driven toward Nethys's faith instead.

While the specifics of the path may vary, all worshipers of Irori require good health and a clear mind, so priests avoid excessive drinking or eating, and the use of intoxicants or other things that dull the senses. However, some sects teach that drunkenness and certain drugs help expand the user's consciousness, and priests of these sects dose themselves on a regular basis.

Most temples and monasteries are self-sufficient, though some operate at a near-poverty level and depend on donations from pilgrims and layfolk. In either case, it is only loner or extroverted priests who find reason to barter or sell their services. For example, masters of a specialized diet might sell rare herbs used for medicinal or cultural purposes, practitioners of exotic martial arts might work at a fighting academy, and others might teach at a university or lecture members of other faiths on various topics.

As it is well documented that Irori often challenged himself both physically and mentally on his path to enlightenment, many of his followers attempt to do the same in reverence to their god. Traditionally, a worshiper attempts such a trial for exactly 1 year, though some embrace multiple challenges for longer periods. Such tests of body, mind, and faith might include living on rice and water, taking a vow of silence, raising a limb for a year, counting every waking breath, and so on.

A typical day for a priest begins with exercise, a meal, and meditation, with these activities repeating throughout the day. Depending on priests' chosen paths, they may emphasize one of these activities more than others, or avoid certain activities entirely. Some priests spend days at a time meditating, only pausing a few minutes each day for bread and water, while others eat raw meat every hour and spend the rest of their time lifting heavy stones to build strength.

HOLY TEXT

Irori's sacred book is *Unbinding the Fetters*, a lengthy tome describing meditation, physical exercises, diet, and other methods to transcend the limitations of the mortal form. Each sect tends to use its own version of the book, adding chapters that clarify and expand upon what its members feel is the best way to achieve enlightenment. Though one sect may not approve of another sect's amendments, the main sections of the book are used by the entire religion, and some scholars of the church collect different versions to compare and contrast the various methods.

APHORISMS

Although countless individual masters have written or spoken informative quotations within the context of Irori's faith, two quotes from the god himself stand out as key among the faithful.

Endure and Renew:

Just as a battle is not won with a single punch or kick, enlightenment is not reached with one bout of meditation or the reading of one book. Most people spend lifetimes trying to achieve perfection. Expect setbacks. Learn from your mistakes. Improve yourself now that your next life will bring you closer.

Mastery without Form:

This is the root of Irori's manifold philosophy: that each person's path is unique, and while you can learn much from the teachings of others, you must be willing to strike out on your own path if that is the way for you to achieve perfection. One who spends too much time trying to learn another person's path may limit his own potential. Recognize the limits of others—physical, mental, or spiritual—and do not assume they are also your limits.



HOLIDAYS

As there are many paths to enlightenment, a community devoted to a particular path may have its own set of holidays; for example, a temple espousing the invigorating power of sunlight might hold the summer solstice as a holiday, while another promoting the health aspects of raw grains might celebrate the Harvest Feast. This means there are countless holidays in the church, varying from sect to sect, and some scholars of religion claim that any particular day of the year is a holy day for at least one sect of Irori's faith. Despite these varied practices, most churches use the Master's Rebus in their holiday celebration. Worshipers draw the rebus on thin cloth or paper and set it afloat on a lake or river to bump into others, sink, or be carried out of sight, much as individual mortal lives interact.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Irori respects that other deities are different spiritual beings and that what is correct for him may not be so for them. As such, he tries to avoid interfering with other divine beings unless they threaten his work or his people. He dislikes those who wish to tear down or corrupt the accomplishments of others, and he has an ongoing feud with Asmodeus because the Prince of Darkness likes to taunt the Master's followers with shortcuts to perfection that are fraught with pitfalls. There is a minor rivalry between his faith and those of Cayden Cailean, Iomedae, and Norgorber, for, unlike them, he became a god without the help of a magical artifact—in effect, he considers their achievements cheating, but is polite enough not to confront them about it unless he feels they grow too arrogant. His feud with Norgorber goes somewhat deeper—whereas Irori seeks to share knowledge, the god of secrets binds wisdom and often endangers his followers. This conflict is ongoing, but Irori views it as merely one more challenge to be experienced and overcome.

Irori had a friendly relationship with Aroden, as they both were powerful mortals who became gods, and the death of the Last Azlanti greatly troubled him for a time. Followers of Irori are taught to show respect for Aroden's holy sites, much as a great warrior would honor the graves of his friends and honorable enemies. This reverence does not extend to sites that have been converted to Iomedae's service, though he holds no enmity toward Aroden's heir and understands the practicality of these alterations.

RELIGIOUS TRAINING

Clerics of Irori may prepare *astral projection* and *moment of prescience* as 8th-level spells, and *transformation* as a 6th-level spell. Monks with access to the quivering palm ability may use it to render a target comatose for an extended period (lasting until the target receives a *heal*, *restoration*, or *greater restoration* spell) rather than kill, chosen at the time the

CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Irori's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

Summon Monster IV

Giant mantis*

Tiger*

* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but is otherwise normal for its kind.

quivering palm is activated. Monks may use their wholeness of body ability on a willing creature as a standard action. The monk must touch the target, and the target becomes fatigued from this aid. In addition to the *channel vigor* spell (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Gods and Magic*), priests of Irori have access to the following spell.

REPLENISH KI

School conjuration (healing); **Level** cleric 4

Casting Time 1 minute

Components V, S, DF

Range touch

Target creature touched

Duration instantaneous

You tune the target's internal store of supernatural energy, replenishing its *ki* pool. If you are the target, you regain 2 *ki* points. If another creature is the target, it regains 1 *ki* point. This does not allow the target to exceed its *ki* pool's maximum. This spell has no effect if the target does not have a *ki* pool.

PLANAR ALLIES

Most of Irori's divine servants are ascended or reincarnated mortals, taking steps toward perfection with each lifetime and gaining wisdom with each journey. His herald is the Old Man, a bald, elderly human of uncertain ethnicity who moves with an alien grace that belies his apparent age and whose strength far exceeds that of a mortal of his build. Notable masters who serve Irori include the following.

Cheu Chem: This "ghost tiger" is an intelligent, celestial white tiger who can speak several languages. She claims this is her fourth incarnation as an intelligent animal, and believes her path to perfection does not require a humanoid shape. She has been known to "play rough" with her students, cuffing them for back-talk, though always with her claws sheathed.

Sixth Rebirth: This dour stone giant's flesh bears several rough scars, as if he had scoured away tattoos from a life he wishes to forget. He prefers meditation to physical exertion, but can pulverize stone and steel with his bare hands for the proper cause.