

Fist of the Heavens:

A Guide to the Champions of Irori



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So you've decided to become a Champion, have you? Well, you've passed your first test by finding me, as we don't exactly advertise. Not that we are ashamed of anything we do, but it is a hard path we follow and we would not like to impose it on the unready.

We Champions of Irori subscribe to the almost heretical belief that the enlightenment of others is as important as the enlightenment of the self. We seek nothing less than the awakening of society to the teaching of the Master of Masters. To do that, we must protect and nurture the uninitiated

If you can live your life in the pursuit of this goal, then you will be worthy to be called one of Irori's Champions.

What is a Champion of Irori?

In brief, Champion of Irori is a Prestige Class that blends elements of monks and paladins. They get the unarmed combat ability of monks and the smiting ability of the paladin. Righteous isn't it?

Not so fast though. Champions of Irori (henceforth Col) require quite a bit of system mastery to build well on account of their serious MADness. In addition to the traditional monk array of Str, Dex, Con, Wis, they also have to pay attention to Cha (to power their smiting).

But thankfully, you have me around to discuss various ways around this. As usual the color scheme for describing options is as follows:

Blue- This is a fantastic choice, and should be taken post-haste for all Cols

Green- A good choice which can work for many builds.

Orange- A sub-par choice, merely average

Red- An awful choice, why are we even discussing this?

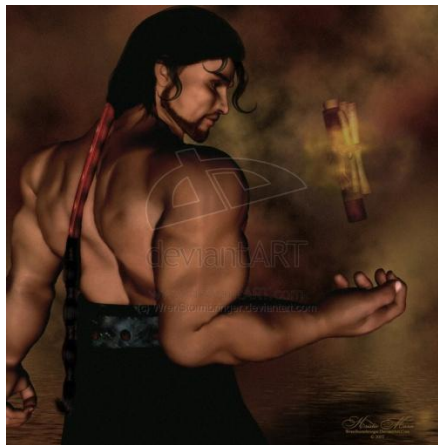
Why do we Fight? A.k.a. Roles



While we might go into further details later in the guide, the Col really has only one main fighting style, punch and kick things to death, supplemented by smite evil and lay on hands. That simple, really, and there aren't many ways you can go about that differently.

Body and Spirit: a.k.a. the two main Col builds

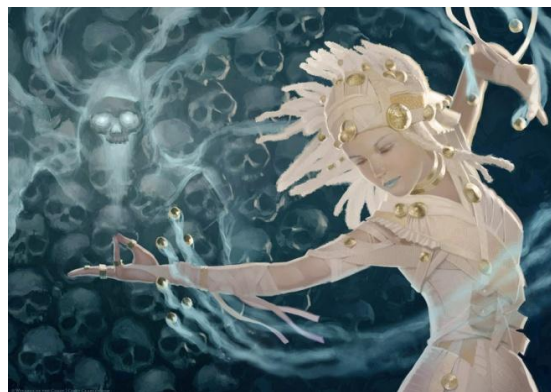
Body



Str/Dex > Wis = Cha > Con > Int

This is your basic Col build, focusing on either Str or Dex (with an agile amulet of mighty fists) for damage, next comes Wis and Cha for ki points and Smiting Evil/Chaos respectively, then Con (which should never be ignored) and finally, with the wooden spoon, Int, which all Cols should dump if possible in my opinion.

Spirit



Wis > Cha > Dex = Str = Con > Int

In my opinion, the Spirit build (focusing on Wis and Cha) is where the Col truly shines. You will have to transfer your to-hit to wisdom somehow (either via the Guided hand feat, the Sensei monk archetype or the guided weapon enhancement *which is 3.5 and not pathfinder, so good luck!*) but the benefits are numerous, especially since smite evil/chaos will be picking up most of the slack for damage.

Blessings and Meditations: a.k.a. Class Features

Detect Chaos

Slightly less useful than detect evil in social circumstances (after all, a chaotic person is not necessarily working towards the ill of others). But in combat, it basically directs you to your targets. Not bad.

Martial Artist

This is gold right here. Col is one of the few PrCs that advances your monk abilities (flurry, AC bonus, stunning fist usages/effects and unarmed strike damage)

Smite Chaos

Once again, a really nice ability. It works like smite evil, but against chaos. The only alignments that are safe from you now are Lawful Good, True Neutral, Lawful Neutral and Neutral Good, and really why are you fighting people with these alignments as a paladin?

Ki Pool

Don't get me wrong, I would rather have this ability than not have it. A Ki pool that counts your Col levels as monk levels for determining ki points and you can use 2 ki points to activate smite evil or lay on hands ([which Col advances as well](#))? Awesome!

But depending on your build, it might pay out less for you (less useful for those that invested in str/dex, more useful for those that went with wis/cha). If you build for this in mind though, this class feature is [straight blue](#).

Pursuit of Knowledge

Basically bardic knowledge. But guess what, you're not a bard! And even if you were trying to play the knowledgeable type (and maybe spring for Kirin style, but more on that later), you don't have the stat points (low Int) or the skill points to make it work.

Sweeping Smite

This is like Cleave+ in that you can spend a standard action and hit two adjacent enemies, and your smite evil/smite chaos applies to them both. At 6th level this becomes like Great Cleave+. Nice, but circumstantial.

Valiant Stand

You get a sacred bonus equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ your level to AC and to hit if you are adjacent to more than one foe and not adjacent to any allies. Once again, nice but circumstantial.

Shield the Weak

You get to forego your save vs an AoE effect to grant other party members (who must be adjacent to you) improved evasion and a bonus to their reflex save. There are two problems with this ability:

1. You don't have a heck of a lot of hit points. Paladins might be d10, but monks and Cols are d8. Good luck taking that fireball right to the face.
2. Your allies must be all clustered around you for this to work. How often does that happen?

Now, not to say that it isn't a cool roleplay ability (save the child from the dragon's breath!) but circumstantial and really detrimental for your continued survival? Yeah, awful.

Skill Mastery

Taking 10 with acrobatics, or perception? Yeah, this is good stuff.

Perfect Opening

I have never seen an ability before this that made an enemy regret rolling a critical. Basically if your foe confirms a crit threat (bad) against you or an ally, you **get to make an attack of opportunity against them!**

And not only that, your attack of opportunity **automatically threatens a critical hit if it hits!**

Insane, and the reason why you have to take combat reflexes as one of your bonus feats.

One Finger

Though it is quite limited in its application (single attack, single standard action, touch attack), this move basically means you never have to worry about armour again on an enemy, you will always hit. I have yet to see other monk builds achieve this.

Perfect Strike

While this is a seriously good ability, rolling twice for to hit and damage and taking the one you want for the next attack, it competes with an extra attack while flurrying in both resources (ki points) and action economy (both activated as a swift action). Situationally good, I suppose.

Whirlwind Strike

Whirlwind attack with a smite evil/smite chaos rider. Not bad, but once again situational. Good when you need it.

The Col Code of Conduct is not super onerous in that it is basically the paladin code (protect innocents, never willingly commit an evil act e.t.c.) with a couple of additional stipulations.

1. Thou shalt not borrow or lend money, avoid material entanglements and...
2. Thou shalt not take upon thyself disciples, familiars, animal companions, mounts, cohorts e.t.c. The path you walk is a solitary one and you aren't this guy:



More's the pity, really.

Races of Virtue

Anybody can follow the Master of Master's teaching...



Yep, anypony...



Core Races

Human

With the extra feat at 1st level, extra skill points allowing you to sell Int lower than 10 and the variable attribute bonus, is it any wonder that we are seeing this as a [Blue](#) choice?

Half Elf

Half Elves, though lacking the free human feat do get Skill Focus as a starting feat. What Skill Focus does is it opens up Eldritch Heritage as an option later (remember, Col have a high Cha anyway) which is awesome!

+2 to Perception and multitalented is nice as well (since we are obliged to multiclass as Monk and Paladin, so we might as well get rewarded for it).

Half Orc

Half Orcs are... okay. Stat wise, the same as humans and half elves, and ferocity does contribute some staying power and toothy is an amusing trait to take for a bit of extra damage, but there isn't anything in particular to recommend them. Racial feats aren't great either.

Halfling

Halflings are an interesting choice. Ability boosts +2 to Dex and Cha, while not exactly perfect for Cols are helpful for playing a really defensive build with the crane style line of feats, and this is really boosted by the Defensive Fighter racial feat that halflings can take.

The -2 to Str and small size for unarmed strike is painful, but if you have a starting 10, you should do fine letting smite evil/chaos do the heavy lifting for damage as you level.

Gnome

All the weaknesses of halflings and none of the strengths. The only saving grace is the [Zen Koan](#) racial feat, which is basically enemy lockdown if they can't beat your bluff check. It is really ki point dependent but as we will see, Col builds are all about getting a lot of ki points.

Elf

Urrrgh, the stat boosts are in the wrong place, the racial traits are awful and the racial feats all deal with arcane spellcasting. Pass and pass hard.

Dwarf

The stats are not bad (+2 Con, Wis, -2 Cha) in and of themselves, but the racial traits contribute nothing and the racial feats are not particularly helpful.

Other Races:

Note: I am not going to list every race here, just the ones who have something interesting to offer. If you think a race should end up here, please just let me know.

Aasimar

Aasimars are great Cols, up there with half elves, humans and halflings. Their stats are perfect (+2 wis and cha, no drawbacks) and you can leverage middle age stat benefits for even more stat points (you can even have a great str and dex to start off with!) if you take the immortal spark trait (no physical penalties for being middle age)

Note: This trick is not PFS legal (no aging benefits/drawbacks)

Tengu

An interesting race, much like the half orc in that they can get natural weapons (Orcs get a 1d6 bite, Tengu can get a 1d6 beak and two 1d3 claw attacks), since smite evil applies to these attacks as well, Tengus benefit very much from it. Statwise, not badly placed +2 Dex and Wis (-2 Con)

Tiefling

The generic tiefling is not very well placed to be a Col, but some of the fiendish heritages have good stat combinations for the Col class (+Str/Wis, -Int). The Nightmare Fist feat tree makes good use of the

race's *darkness* spell like ability (though you lose that if you take a fiendish heritage, ah well).

Hobgoblin

Interesting solely because of their racial monk archetype, the Ironskin Monk. This basically allows you to wear armor (light armor, so mithril breastplate probably, if you want the full benefits of the class abilities) and take the *brawling* armor property (+2 to hit and damage with unarmed attacks!). Very much damaged focused at that point. Also +2 Dex and Con and no drawback, perfect for a "Body" based build!

*Note*I have dropped the Hobgoblin from a Blue to a Green on account that Ironskin monk doesn't play at all well with the other archetypes that give up flurry of blows.

Oread

The stat boosts are in the right place for a strength based Col (shame about the -2 Cha though) and the Student of the Stone racial archetype is interesting for its "standing on the ground" based bonuses.

Changeling

The daughters of hags have a very good stat lineup for a "Spirit" build Col if they choose to turn to the light. (+2 Wis and Cha, -2 Con). They also have natural attacks (in the form of claws) which as mentioned are great for smite evil, and their racial trait gives them +1 to melee damage. All in all, not a bad pick.

Merfolk

Merfolk are basically a bundle of bonuses with no drawbacks, +2 Dex, Con and Cha, +2 natural armor bonus, can't be tripped, 30 ft swimspeed (15 ft landspeed, but no problem with the monk speed bonus) with the Strongtail trait. A very strong choice for both "Body" and "Spirit" builds.

Nagaji

The Nagaji has well placed stat bonuses (+2 Str, +2 Cha, -2 Int) for a "Body" build, and a natural armor bonus on top of that. Racial feats aren't anything to write home about though.

Suli

As the Nagaji, the Suli have well placed stat bonuses (+2 Str, +2 Cha, -2 Int) and elemental resistances as well as the elemental assault power (no need to spring for a flaming or frost enhancement) which can be alternated between all 4 main elements and lasts for a number of rounds equal to level. This boost to damage, I think, tips it into **Green**.

Important Note: You cannot flurry of blows and use your natural attacks as well. So for those races that depend on this (orcs, tengus, changelings) choose a monk archetype that gives up flurry (and pick up two weapon fighting).

The Naked Knight a.k.a. Entry into the Col PrC, Classes and Archetypes



So at bare minimum, the Col requires the Still Mind (Monk 3) and Smite Evil (Paladin 1) abilities, and 5 ranks in Knowledge religion and another knowledge or Linguistics.

So the earliest you can enter is lvl 6 (after taking the required 3 lvls of Monk and 1 of paladin and a level of something else). But is this really the best entry? Let us look at it from both the Body and the Spirit angles.

The Monk:



So in 3 levels vanilla monk gets the following:

Lvl1 - Stunning Fist (**Body** / **Spirit**)

Lvl 1 / 2 - Bonus Feats (**Both**)

Lvl 1 - Flurry of Blows (**Both**)

Lvl 2 - Evasion (Both)

Lvl 3 - Fast Movement (Both)

Lvl 3 - Manoeuvre Training (Body / Spirit)

Lvl 3 - Still Mind (Both)

Nothing objectionable here, really, except that stunning fist might not be as useful for “Body” builds and Manoeuvre training isn’t as useful for “Spirit” builds but something for everyone.

Now before we rush into everything else, I just want to make a point about lvl 4 of Monk. While not losing any BaB, Lvl 4 Monk will also give you a Ki Pool and all those nifty ki tricks that monks get (+4 to AC, extra attack when flurrying e.t.c.).

But since Cols get a Ki Pool as well, you might want to put off Monk lvl 4 to not delay entry into the PrC and pick up the 4th level of monk later. The choice is, as they say, yours.

Archetypes:

Eliminating the archetypes that replace Still Mind (Required for the Col), we have the following:

Flowing Monk - This is a good archetype for both “Body” and “Spirit” build. “Body” builds based on Str get to benefit directly and “Spirit” builds that have previously invested in the Guided hand feat get to apply their Wis bonus to the trip attempts.

Hungry Ghost Monk (Body / Spirit) – The replacement of stunning fist with punishing kick is probably a net positive for the “Body” builds. You won’t get much else out of the class for 3 or 4 levels of Monk though.

Master of Many Styles – Gives up flurry of blows which is a shame. But if you want a more “style” based build, then this is the way to go. For 3 or 4 levels you get to fuse 2 styles, which gives you quite a bit of versatility based on whether you are a “Body” or “Spirit” Col.

Monk of the Four Winds (Body / Spirit) – For 4 levels all you are getting is replacing Stunning Fist with **Elemental Fist**. Good for damage focused “Body” builds, much less so for “Spirit” builds with good stunning fist DCs.

Monk of the Healing Hand – 4 levels in this archetype gets you nothing, nada and zilch.

Monk of the Lotus (**Body** / **Spirit**) – Touch of Serenity is probably better in most ways (except for damage) than stunning fist.

If you come back to this class later and take a couple more levels, the no-action effect lasts for even longer (2 rounds at 6th level). “Body” Cols should avoid this like the plague.

Monk of the Sacred Mountain – You give up evasion but pick up toughness and +1 natural armor, nice. (You can get evasion in a ring). If you take this to 4th level, you can’t be moved from your square. Doubly nice!

Qinggong Monk – I might have given this a higher rating, but you just don’t take enough levels in monk to make this worthwhile. At most you will get 1 qinggong power, so low level scorching ray? Or Deny Death (which is okay I suppose). Slow fall is pretty inconsequential so yeah, its an even trade.

Sensei (**Body** / **Spirit**) – Now this is interesting. This is the second method besides the Guided Hand feat that you can use Wis for to-hit.

You lose flurry of blows, and your “advice” ability is going to be pretty anemic, but it does save you a level of cleric or 4 levels of paladin at the start. (Of course the level of cleric has its own benefits, which I will discuss).

Sohei – I am not convinced this is a good choice. You keep flurry, but your unarmed strike will be forevermore 1d8, and you can take mounted combat feats, which are useless for you (see Col code of conduct).

Tetori – If you want to be grappling, then maybe the Col is not for you. **Though there might be some synergy with the Adept Champion feat...**

Weapon Adept – Seems like a lot of effort to avoid using unarmed strikes that are being boosted by smite evil? I suppose it might be **Green** for Str body builds using a monk weapon two handed with Power attack and Tiger Style.

The Paladin:



Realistically, you only need 1 lvl of Paladin for [Smite Evil](#) to qualify for Col.

2 levels net you [Divine Grace](#) which is awesome for your saves and [Lay on Hands](#) which is awesome for your continued survival.

Archetypes:

[Hospitaler](#) – Take this one, for Pete’s sake, take this one! A whole other pool of channel energy to play with? Yes please. (Though you will probably get that pool later in your career if you return to paladin after finishing all 10 levels of the Col)

[Everything else](#) – Really, they are all basically useless for the Col.

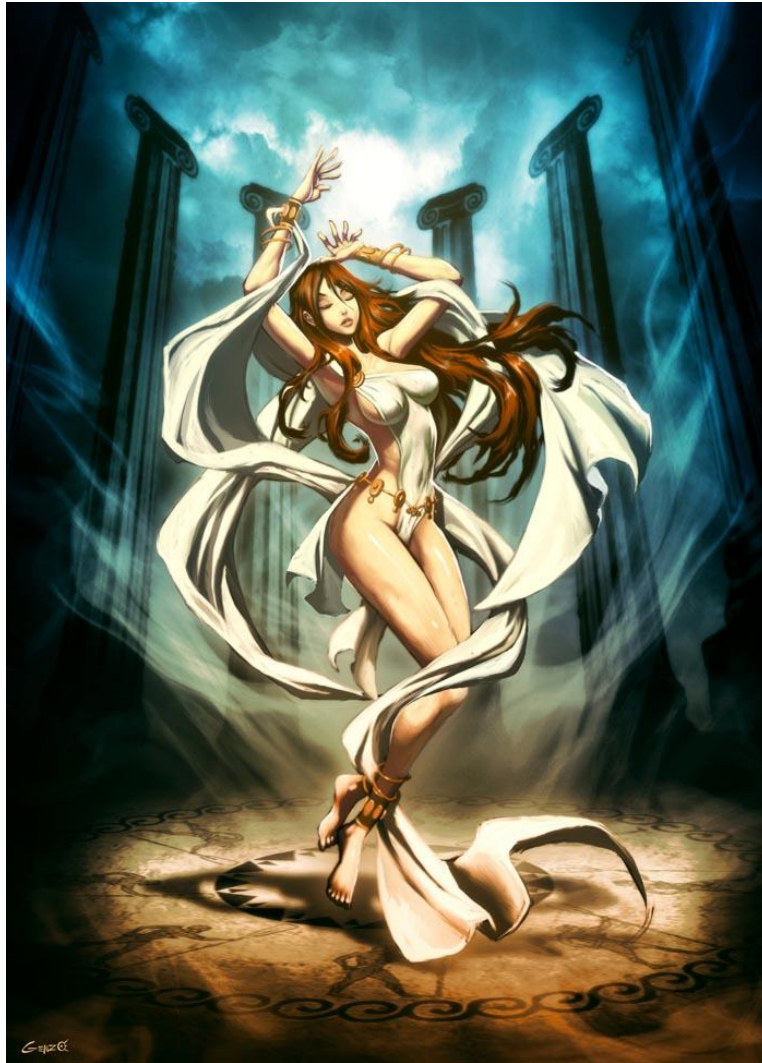
The Cleric ?!!?!?



Yep, the humble cleric has something to contribute to the Col class. Mostly for the “Spirit” builds it must be said, but certainly possible for the “Body” builds as well.

1. Clerics get [Channel Energy](#) at 1st level, meaning they can take [Channel Smite](#) and [Guided hand](#) quite early on (1st level for humans with 2 feats, 3rd level for every other race)
2. The pool of [Channel Energy](#) uses that the cleric has can be converted to ki points via the use of the [Bronze Gong](#), an item no Col should be without (“Body” builds can get a similar pool of channel energy from the [Hospitaler](#) Paladin archetype at 4th lvl)
3. Free [Weapon Focus \(Unarmed Strike\)](#)? Since you’re only taking one level of cleric, you don’t really care too much about the domain spells. Taking the [Crusader Archetype](#) will net you a feat for (basically) free.
4. The [Theologian Archetype](#) is useful as well if there is a 1st level domain spell that you are interested in ([Enlarge Person](#) from the strength domain say), you can now cast it as a regular spell.

The Oracle



It has been pointed out to me that Oracles are another class that might be worth a 1 level dip.

If you choose as your revelation the Oracle of Lore's [Sidestep Secret](#), then you will be able to use your Cha instead of your Dex for AC, something to think about for a "Spirit" build Col.

Truth be told, unlike the level of cleric, I feel the level of oracle doesn't offer enough bang for the buck. If it added Cha on top of Dex to AC, that would be something. As is, I recommend this option only for low point buy games or for after you finish the Col prestige class and you would like to boost your AC.

Archetypes – Yeah, for a one level dip, all the archetypes (even the racial ones) offer basically nothing.

The Ninja



Another suggested class was the *Ninja* which doesn't seem as out of place as it might look at first glance...

The Pros:

- 1: Ninjas get a ki pool based on Cha which stacks with a Monk (and presumably a Col's) ki pool. Good for builds that are dumping Wis.
- 2: Ninjas get Vanish trick which is basically Invisibility for 1 ki point. Since you have lots of ki points, well you are basically sneaky McStaberson now.
- 3: Ninjas get sneak attack damage. Flank with an ally and now all your 9 attacks deal xd6 extra damage.

The Cons:

You need to take the Ninja class for 2 levels, and whether you want to do that on top of 1 or 2 levels of Paladin, 3 or 4 levels of Monk and whatever else (probably 1 level of Oracle for Sidestep Secret) is another thing entirely.

Archetypes – The terror of the Night needs no Archetypes. Also for 2 levels, nothing is worthwhile.

The 7 Steps to the Sun a.k.a. Feats, Skills and Traits



Feats will be a work in progress section for a while as I am not intimately familiar with all 3 million feats in Pathfinder, so I'm sure I will have missed something. If you think I have, please tell me and I'll add it in this section when I update.

That said, here are some key ones for any self respecting Col.

General Feats:

Adept Champion – I mentioned this when I was talking about the Tetori archetype, an unorthodox choice that adds half your smite evil damage as a bonus to manoeuvre checks.

Bewildering Koan – If you are a gnome (or descended from a gnome via Racial Heritage), this is a pretty good feat to take. For all enemies that don't have high sense motive you can basically lock them down as long as your ki points hold up.

Note: I had this for one game and then the DM banned it and made me remake my character. I knew it was a winner then. :P

Eldritch Heritage, Improved Eldritch Heritage, Greater Eldritch Heritage – Monks usually can't qualify for it due to the high Cha requirements, but for you, it fits just fine. I highly recommend the Orc bloodline for the extra strength and increase to size that you can get from it.

Extra Channel – Channel energy is great and pulls triple duty for the Col, but I'm not sure that 2 uses are worth a feat. Trust me, you will have lots of them anyway from being a Cleric and a Hospitaler Paladin.

Extra Ki, Extra Lay on hands – See Extra Channel.

Noble Scion – This feat actually has some interesting possibilities to it. Scion of War allows you to use your Cha instead of your Dex for Initiative and Scion of Peace allows you to "Take 13" instead of "Take 10" for wisdom based skills.

Since you already have Skill Mastery from Col, this might actually be quite a hefty bonus (Pick for example Perception, Sense Motive and Acrobatics *After having picked the Wisdom in the Flesh Trait, but more on that later*)

Protector's Strike – The deflection bonus from smite evil goes to a teammate instead of you. Eh, I'd rather draw the heat onto myself with damage and then tank, personally.

Racial Heritage – If you are human, this is how you get around all those Racial requirements. Col is a feat-tight-ish class, but I'm sure some people have ideas about how to abuse this.

Radiant Charge - You do have a lot of Lay on hand attempts thanks to the Channel Energy = Ki = Lay on Hands alchemy that the Col can do, but there is no call to waste them like this.

Reward of Grace, Reward of Life – Bonuses are too small to be worthwhile feat picks.

Stalwart – For certain builds (mostly involving Crane Style) this might actually be pretty good. Having to take Endurance and Diehard as pre-reqs make it much less so though.

Improved Stalwart – DR 10 is nothing to sniff at, though you had to spend 4 feats to get it.

Toughness – For a MAD front-liner, this is a pretty good feat. **Even better** if you can get it for free from Monk of the Sacred Mountain.

Combat Feats:

Cautious Fighter – If you are a halving Col, you should probably take this, and possibly **Blundering Defense** so you can spread the love around.

Channel Smite, **Guided Hand** – Channel Smite is awful, I admit, and sees use only as a gateway to Guided Hand, which is great for “Spirit” builds. Body builds get to skip these two picks but are more MAD.

Charge of the Righteous – Wow, how specific can you get? (I suppose the feat could only work on Fridays and Sundays as well)

Cleave et.al – Don’t bother, you get these for free.

Critical Focus, **Critical (x)**: The Critical feats are not something a monk usually goes for, lacking both the BaB and the crit range. But based on your **Perfect Opening** Col ability, you crit whenever enemies do. So taking one of these might be worthwhile.

Crusader’s Fist – Too bad you don’t have Touch of Corruption. This would be perfect otherwise.

Elemental Fist – If you have a free feat to take this, the damage isn’t bad. But you could of course just buy a flaming AoMF.

Monastic Legacy – You might have quite a few levels in paladin (and one in cleric or oracle) so this might help your unarmed strike damage.

Multiattack – If you are using natural weapons, this probably is a must have if you can qualify for it (hint, a ring of rat fangs will give you a bite attack if you already have 2 natural attacks *like the Changeling for example*)

Osyluth Guile – This feat is pure gold. If you are playing a defensive Col (using crane style and fighting defensively), then this feat will add your Cha to your AC as a dodge bonus! On top of the deflection bonus equal to your Cha from **Smite Evil**. Heck if you take the level of Oracle and the

Sidestep Secret Revelation, you can add your Cha 3 times to your AC! Talk about not wanting to be hit in the face.

Punishing Kick – Quite good for some battlefield control, but ultimately, usefulness depends in an inverse fashion on how high your **Stunning Fist** DC is.

Power Attack – A decent feat for “Body” Cols, **especially good** if you want to play the odd one out “Body” Col who uses a two handed weapon and **Tiger Pounce**.

Stand Still, Steady Engagement – Now I’m pretty sure the utility of these feats is situational, you do a lot of damage and most enemies won’t want to trigger an AoO by moving by you just for kicks. I suppose for RP reasons you might take them and become a really sticky Col.

Touch of Serenity – Is probably strictly better than Stunning Fist, but the BaB 8 requirement hurts it. If desired, take it via the Monk of the Lotus Archetype.

Improved Trip, Vicious Stomp – If you are going with the Flowing Monk archetype, you will probably want these two feats (the first of which I recommend getting from the Archetype itself as a bonus feat) I can’t see this character qualifying for Combat Expertise with its low Int, so Greater Trip is out of the question which is a shame.

Improved Unarmed Strike – In which universe would you not have this for free?

Weapon Focus (Unarmed Strike) – A good feat, but with all the other good feats, hard to justify. Better to get it for free from the **Crusader Cleric** Archetype.

Style Feats:

Archon Style- While this style is interesting and thematic, the requirement for Combat Expertise (Which you don’t have the Int for) and for allies to be adjacent for a lot of the bennies makes this a situational pick at best.

Boar Style – And it's attendant feats, Boar ferocity and Boar Shred are good for a bit of extra damage. Whether you will have the skill points for Intimidate is another question entirely. Probably a good pick for the "Body" style Cols.

Crane Style – All right, now we're talking! Crane Style (and the attendant feats Crane Wing and Crane Riposte) is great not only because of it's own benefits (less penalty, more AC when fighting defensively, block and counterattack first attack that hits you), but also because of its great Synergy.

Osyluth Guile which was already mentioned to be a great feat for a Col with high charisma only works when you are fighting defensively as does **Cautious Fighter** for Halflings.

Not only that but **Perfect Opening**, the Col class ability that lets you counterattack when a foe confirms a critical against you, well now you get to attack enemies twice when they roll a crit against you.

The progression is as follows:

Enemy rolls a crit against you -> Enemy confirms crit against you -> Counterattack with Perfect Opening -> Enemy hits you with critical -> Parry with Crane Wing-> Counterattack with Crane Riposte.

Beautiful! Not only do they get a critical right back when they confirm their crit, their attack is parried and then they are hit again for their trouble!

Your DM should be trembling when he rolls the dice against you with this, he won't ever want to roll a crit against you ever again.

Djinni Style, Efreeti Style, Marid Style, Shaitan Style – Are all right, I guess but they don't bring any synergy to the table and have pretty onerous Con requirements so you won't be taking them early on in your adventuring career. Solidly meh.

Dragon Style – Solid style for "Body" Cols, qualifies them for **Elemental Fist** and really amplifies existing Str to damage.

Earth Child Style – Unless you really have a hate on for giants, pass.

Janni Style – Some interesting mobility/manoeuvre focused options for the “Body” Col here, whether you have space of it is another question. A possible pick for the Master of Many Styles Monk entry.

Kirin Style – You are never going to have the Int to make this work, pass.

Kobold Style – Combat Expertise has some harsh Int requirements and this style seems more manoeuvre focused than anything. Not a great pick.

Mantis Style – For “Spirit” Cols only, at least the first two feats, Mantis Style and Mantis Wisdom give some nice benefits when you deliver stunning fists.

Monkey Style - If you can spare the extra points for an otherwise useless skill (climb), then this style has potential, especially if you boost your stunning fist DC (“Spirit” Cols only) and get to Monkey Shine.

Panther Style – I don’t like it because it forces you into a playstyle that detracts from punching your opponent repeatedly in the face. You’ve got the Power, why dilute it by running around and taking AoOs?

Snake Style – Quite good actually, when combined with Crane style (you will need levels in the Master of Many Styles archetype) can make you a double jeopardy kind of combatant. If they hit you, you get to hit them, if they miss you, you get to hit them. Try to not take the not as good middle feat **Snake Sidewind** though.

Snapping Turtle Style – The extra AC is nice, but the emphasis on grapple initiation isn’t. You don’t have this many feats to spend on so-so feat trees.

Tiger Style – Basically free power attacks (no penalty to hit) for “Body” type Cols, as mentioned, use a weapon two handed and go to town smiting everyone. Try not to take the awful **Tiger Claws** middle feat (skip to the 3rd feat using the Master of Many Styles Archetype). Might be **Blue** in the right build.

Skills:

Skills for a Col are a bit of a thorny affair. If you have been following my instructions, you have dumped **Int** which means the number of skill points that you are getting isn't great. Races that give bonus skill points are therefore of high value (Humans, Half-Elves for the extra favored class).

However, you also have Skill Mastery from the Col class, which means that the skills that you do have, you can use reliably, but which ones to take?

Acrobatics – Not only are you going to want to take this to tumble your way across the battlefield, it is also a requisite for more AC when you fight defensively. More or less a must pick.

Appraise – You are meant to not get entangled in material things! (Besides you don't have the skill points for it) Let the wizard or rogue handle this one.

Bluff – For all that you need to tell everyone the truth, nothing says that you have to be as honest about where your next punch is going to land. You need 8 ranks of this for **Osyluth Guile**, after that I would drop it and spend my points somewhere else.

Climb, Swim, Ride – The application of these skills is very situational, and you can't have animal companions anyway (see the Col code of conduct). Pass.

Craft – Once again, another skill you don't have the points for, really. And since you don't wear armour, it doesn't even help at low levels.

Diplomacy, Sense Motive – If you have the skill points for it (maybe from a late career purchase of a **Headband of Mental Superiority**) you would make a really good party face thanks to your Cha and Wis.

Disable Device, Sleight of Hand, Disguise – You aren't the rogue and have no bonuses to these skills anyway. Leave it to the morally dubious and take the higher path.

Escape Artist – Might actually be a decent pick for a Spirit Col (and a target for the **Wisdom in the Flesh** trait) after all, your Str isn't great so you need some way to escape grapples.

Fly – Another good late game purchase as a lot of combats take to the air. Another good pick for a skill on a **Headband of Mental Superiority**.

Handle Animal, Survival – Handle Animal is right out. Yours is the path of someone who walks. Survival you will be taking **Skill Focus** for if you want to qualify for **Eldritch Heritage (Orc)** but that will be enough to feed yourself (and probably one friend) so after that I'd not put any points in it.

Heal – A very thematic skill, but also a skill that doesn't give enough back and probably you don't have the points for, a shame.

Intimidate – Sure, you could take it, but I think Diplomacy would be more in character, don't you?

Knowledge (x), Linguistics – All right, Good News: you need 5 ranks in Knowledge (Religion) and another Knowledge or Linguistics (I personally prefer Linguistics for the bonus language) to qualify for Col, and you also get a bonus going up to +5 to use them and can use them untrained! Bad news, your **Int** Sucks.

I would put 5 points in Knowledge Religion and Linguistics and then switch to something more profitable, though if you want to keep building on your knowledge base you can become a really formidable sage type character.

Perception – One of the most important skills in the game and one that "Spirit" Cols are really good at, this is usually one of my picks.

Perform – Unlike a bard, you don't actually need this for anything. (Maybe a couple of points if you want to pick up **Janni Style**)

Spellcraft – Leave this one to your scholarly friends, all you need to know is that you can make the saves.

Stealth – Once again not a bad pick, but there are party members that can go invisible and silent and they should legitimately be the ones who are scouting.

[Use Magic Device](#) – None of your classes offer this as a trained skill, so you are going to have to take a suitable trait if you want to get the full use of this one. But free access to buffing wands is pretty sweet.

Traits:

Unlike other builds, there is a certain amount of leeway in your selection of traits as there aren't any that specifically stand out as being essential for a Col.

Any trait that raise initiative or give you a bonus to a skill that you want to develop probably helps. That said, here are a couple of good ones (and feel free to tell me if you want your favorite one added):

Regional

[Mizu ki hikari Rebel](#), [Quain Martial Artist](#): Both of these give +1 to unarmed damage, its like half of weapon specialization really.

[Fight for Liberty](#): You specifically don't want this for yourself, but if you can convince a friendly bard to get it, +2 to hit during all combats is nothing to sniff at. (Though if you count as your own ally, this might not be a bad trait to get after all...)

Faith

[Wisdom in the Flesh \(Irori\)](#): Pick a physical skill and now it is linked to Wis instead of whatever stat it was linked to previously. I recommend Acrobatics to improve your mobility.

Witness my FINAL TECHNIQUE! A.k.a. Secrets



The Wise Master once said “There are two things that lead to success in the martial arts.

The first is to never tell others everything that you know.”

So in case you haven't gleaned it from the rest of the guide here are the secret techniques for really getting the most out of your Champion of Irori.

Secret Technique 1: Infinite Smite Evil/Lay on Hands:

Well infinite is a bit much, but certainly enough to smite every foe you come across. 20th level Paladins have 7 smite evil attempts / day, a 10th level Cols has 17 (and the number keeps going up).

How does this work? Well the ingredients are as follow:

1. A pool of ki (courtesy Monk and Col levels)

2. A pool of Channel Energy Uses (courtesy Cleric 1 and Hospitaler Paladin 4, preferably both.)
 3. The Col's 2nd lvl ability that converts 2 ki points to a Smite Evil or Lay on Hands use.
 4. A Ring of Ki Mastery that lowers the cost of any activated ki ability by one ki point
 5. A Bronze Gong Channel focus (converts channel energy uses to ki points)
- So first off, all of your channel energy uses can be converted to ki points via the bronze gong. On a reasonably Cha high character, that is around 8 more ki points per day. On a 10th level character, that works out to be around 16 ki points/day.
 - Now the Col can use ki to activate Smite Evil/Lay on Hands at 2 ki a pop. Or 1 ki per use if he has a Ring of Ki Mastery.
 - You need to put two ki points in a Ring of Ki Mastery to gain the above benefit, so that is 14 ki points left, but the character has 2 native smite evil attempts already (one from Paladin levels and one from the Col levels), so that is 16 uses of Smite Evil/day at maximum.
 - If you are desperate you can use the two ki points stored in a Ring of Ki Mastery to activate Smite Evil/Lay on Hands one last time for that day. But I think 16 uses should be enough to see off most daily battles.

Secret Technique 2: Too Pretty to Hit.

Leveraging all the different bonuses that give Cha to AC.

- Smite Evil will give you a deflection bonus based on Cha to AC
- Osyluth Guile will give you a dodge bonus based on Cha to AC when you are fighting defensively (might as well make good use of Crane style then)
- The Oracles Sidestep secret will give you Cha to AC instead of Dex

Secret Technique 3: You Dare to Critical Me?!!!

Enemies pay for confirming critical hits against you and you take no damage.

Ingredients:

1. Crane Style, Crane Wing and Crane Riposte
 2. The Col's 7th lvl ability Perfect Opening
 3. Combat Reflexes
- So how this works is an enemy rolls a crit to hit you and successfully confirms it, Uh Oh.
 - But the Col's ability Perfect Opening lets you make an AoO that is automatically a critical threat against people who confirm a crit against you. Whammo!
 - It wasn't enough, the monster is still standing, the blow heading straight for your head, what do? Crane Wing will allow you to deflect the blow (no damage) and Crane Riposte will allow you to make another AoO against the foe who hit you.
 - End result, you have taken no damage, and the enemy has eaten two AoOs one of which is an automatic critical threat.
 - Profit!

Armaments of Faith a.k.a. Items



SIDEREAL MARTIAL ARTS

I'm going to stab you to death with the idea of children's games.

Head Slot:

[Jingasa of the fortunate Soldier](#) - +1 luck bonus to AC and negate one critical hit/sneak attack per day for 5000gp? Sold!

Headband Slot:

[Headband of Mental Prowess \(Wis and Cha\)](#) – Yeah, this is a staple for both “Body” and “Spirit” Cols. If you can figure the formula for placing the (Wis and Cha) bonus onto a [Headband of Aerial Agility](#), then you’re set for both mobility and mental stat boosts.

Shockingly there isn’t really anything else I want in this slot.

Eye Slot:

[Arachnid goggles](#) – All round Vision, which prevents flanking, not bad.

Darkland goggles / Goggles of Night – Darkvision is useful if you don't have it.

Swordmaster's Blindfold – Amusing and flavorful item that grants you blindsight... but only within 5ft. *Use the force, Luke*

Truesight Goggles – Gold standard for seeing past illusions. Hefty price tag accompanies it.

Neck Slot:

Amulet of Mighty Fists – Flurrying or natural attacking monks will benefit the most from these.

Amulet of Natural Armor – Oof, tough choice between this and the AoMF. You might want to pay for the doubling up on the amulet if you want the AC (which you will).

Note: The **Eldritch Heritage (Orc) Power of Giants** bloodline ability grants +4 Natural Armor already, so maybe a wand of Barkskin in the meantime until you get this ability at lvl 15/17?

Hand of the Mage – For 900gp, I'd keep one of these on me if I needed to do some telekinetic lifting.

Necklace of Ki Serenity – Not that you will have any problems with ki points if you also have a channel energy pool, but it is useful.

Body Slot:

Monk's Robe – You are missing a couple of monk levels thanks to your levels in paladin, this will top up your unarmed damage and AC, probably a must get.

Otherworldly Kimono – A no save imprisonment that doesn't release your foe unless they can make a DC 20 Int check? Yeah I'll take one of those please... 67000 gp?!!! Does that come with a castle too?

Robe of Blending – A cheap way to get Alter self which can provide natural weapons and stat bonuses.

Shoulders Slot:

Cloak of the Arachnida - If you don't have the ability to fly yet, this is a good pick for mobility. Go go Spiderman!

Cloak of Displacement Major/Minor – Displacement is a good buff if only for 15 rounds/day.

Cloak of Resistance – For all that it is boring, this is probably the best pick for the Shoulders Slot. Your saves will thank you.

Cloak of the Hedge Wizard – If you have a spare 2500gp, getting a free wizard cantrip and prestidigitation at will is a nifty trick. (Don't wear it all the time of course, just pull it out when you need it just like the Hand of the Mage)

Juggernaut's Pauldrons – Is not a bad item, if only for the at will enlarge person.

Wings of Flying – Flight, if you can't get it from headbands of aerial agility.

Chest Slot:

Mantle of Faith – DR 5/evil is nothing to be sniffed at, the 76000gp price tag means this is probably a high level purchase.

Spectral Shroud – Wow, this is one of the most useful chest items of the lot, see invisible and ethereal creatures and incorporeal and flying for 10 rounds / day. Fantastic! And all for 26000 gp.

Wrists Slot:

Bonebreaker Gauntlets – These are amusing, 1/day force a foe to make a DC 14 Will save, if failed -6 to Str/Dex or Con. Might be a bit expensive at 6000gp though.

Bracers of Armor- Once again boring, but once again needed. You might have to double up with...

Bracers of the Avenging Knight - +4 to smite evil damage, since you smite evil all the time, it is basically +4 to damage in an item.

Silver Smite Bracers - These do *less* than Bracers of the Avenging Knight, why do they cost *more*?

Rings:

Ring of Protection – Its a trap! Smite evil gives you a deflection bonus already and the two don't stack!

Ring of Ki Mastery – See the Secrets section for why this is a must buy. Seriously, one of your rings will be this.

Ring of Evasion – If you gave up Evasion to take the Monk of the Sacred Mountain archetype, you're going to want one of these rings.

Ring of Foe Focus - +2 typeless bonus to AC and Saves against a single foe for 10000gp? I'll take it.

Ring of Freedom of Movement – Ouch, 40000 gp! Can't argue with the results though.

Ring of Regeneration – This on top of lay on hands will have enemies pulling out their hair. Green due to the high price (45000gp)

Belt Slot:

Belt of Physical Perfection – Both "Body" and "Spirit" Cols will need this eventually. Start from a Belt of Giant's Strength or what have you and work your way up.

Belt of Stoneskin – If only you could wear more than one belt. *Sigh*, well this isn't Final Fantasy so it is a real shame.

Feet Slot:

Boots of Speed – Haste at will for 10 rounds / day? A great item.

Boots of Striding and Springing – Not a bad way to get a bonus to speed, though you are already moving faster than most of your compatriots.

Sorry Merfolk monks

Daredevil Boots – A good cheap and early boost to your acrobatics check.

Slippers of Spider Climbing – Mobility again and it doesn't take up a precious Shoulders slot.

Boots of Flying – The limitations on this item are what drive this into the Green.

Hands Slot:

Deliquescent Gloves – Free corrosive property on your unarmed strikes, it doesn't matter that it costs 8000gp, you're making savings not putting it on an Amulet of Mighty Fists.

Gloves of Shaping – You know how stone shape is a spell you always want to have around but have never memorized? Well now you have the power!

Weapons Qualities:

Note: Normally I'd say that the unarmed route was better for the Col but there are some legit ways that you can benefit from weapon qualities (Such as the Amulet of Mighty Fist, henceforth AoMF):

Allying – Now some might say this is a bit, well, cheesy, but since you count as your own ally, you could technically transfer the enhancement bonus from an Allying weapon to your own Unarmed strikes, which is cheaper than getting the same bonus from an AoMF.

Agile – If you wanted to play a dexterous "Body" style Col, this would be the quality you would want on an AoMF.

Ghost Touch – If you have money to spare, this is a good enhancement to get as you will not be dealing force damage at any point in your career.

Nullifying – Not for yourself, but the party mage will love you if you take this on your AoMF for your 9 attacks/round.

Armor Qualities:

You can have armor qualities placed in a pair of Bracers of Armor, here are the good ones (not many, I'm afraid):

Brawling – This quality is soooo good! +2 to hit and damage with unarmed strikes! But only on light armor, I'm afraid. If you went with an armored build and dumped Wis, you basically did it for this.

Champion - +1 bonus enhancement for a +2 sacred bonus to AC against foe being smote? Excellent, especially since you always be smitin, yo.

Nonmagical Equipment:

Bronze Gong Channel Focus – This is basically your holy symbol that enacts the channel energy – ki transformation. Never leave home without it! (Heck, pack a second one. They can be sundered)