

The Monk

In Modern Life

by duus*

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[The monk] cares passionately for the perfection of her art and, thereby, her personal perfection. Her goal is to achieve a state that is beyond the mortal realm.¹

1 Description

The monk is a calm, reflective, helpful force. The monk tries to change the world in small ways to ease suffering and expand joy; a hand on a shoulder, a smile, throwing away litter on the floor, clipping back a wild hedge to a small object of beauty. The monk understands that his mind and body are his instrument in the world. Therefore, he strives to perfect his mind and body.

The monk is aware of his surroundings, is vigilantly mindful. He is calm, decisive, thoughtful, and clear.

The monk avoids luxury that emphasizes *disengagement from the world*. That is, he avoids *passivity*, in all its forms. His joy comes from engagement. In that way, he is drunk on life, as they say.

The monk meditates, practices yoga, exercises regularly, breathes deeply, and later, develops his mind and body into the study of redirecting force. These skills can be attained through the study of the 'soft' martial arts that stress defense and redirection and control and the center.

The monk also cultivates wisdom. He strives for insight learning lessons, which he tells as tales.

He exercises regularly. He does not *indulge*.

2 Levels

2.1 First Level

At first level, he strives to meditate twice every day. He strives to rise from bed when he should, immediately and with a clear head, with the intent to sit and meditate and engage with every moment. He strives to delight in all experience, of any kind.

2.1.1 Advancement

He will get to second level when

1. He meditates twice a day, almost every day.
2. He exercises nearly every day.
3. He wakes when he intends nearly every day.
4. He views his old addictions with a wry smile, and can (often) transcend them.

*This is a modern character class developed by duus, based on the D and D class of the same name. Please see <http://thedu.us/character> for more information.

¹*The Player's Handbook*, page 39.

3 The Monk in the Modern Life

This section refers to the modern aspect of the character class: what relationship is between the conception of the monk above and the modern life, and how a human player can play a modern monk.

3.1 Relationship to the Human life

The mental and physical mastery of the monk is most closely tied to the mindfulness training, any number of exercise regimens, strength and flexibility of yoga, and martial arts of the quiet type, like Aikido. Any or all of these pursuits would be fitting for the modern monk. Although this author is not terribly familiar with Bushido (or, for that matter, Chivalry), it may also be relevant.

Mindfulness is the watchword for the monk. Part of living this life is paying attention to the world and learning to see, so that one observes when opportunity arises to heal and help.

3.2 Playing a Modern Monk

The monk strives for personal mastery. Understanding and controlling, directing the self is a goal unto itself. The monk strives to push herself further, to move faster, to be more alert, to pay attention all around her. Personal mastery of the body and mind.

The monk also seeks wisdom, and is quick with calming touch on the shoulder or a simple smile. She is helpful, unassuming, and benign.

3.2.1 Goals

“An individual monk is unlikely to care passionately about championing commoners or amassing wealth,”² The monk lives to find joy in service to the world. She strives to better herself, as to be a more effective instrument of healing. She is consciously dedicated to being a force of good, in the classic sense.

3.2.2 Failure

‘Failure,’ in some technical sense, is an inevitable part of attempting. However, the monk believes, only in this literal technical sense: “I went out to accomplish X , and X was not achieved.” In larger sense, failure is not inevitable. For in not accomplishing X , lessons were learned.

The goal is not to be perfect. The goal is to move toward perfection. If the goal is to move toward perfection, then stepping on to the path is success. And the second step down the path is also success. As is the third.

²Ibid.