The land we live on is the Wildlands. It was full of medicinal plants and the people harvested them and used them in harmony (equivalents of cannabis, kratom, psylocibin, ayahuasca, etc). During the war, an occupying army forced the people to extract the land, and it became barren. When once we fed off our own land, we imported the scarce amount of food we had access to, and were medicated on imported drugs (the equivalent of opium, heroin, fentanyl, amphetamines, etc) to numb us or fuel our work. Civilization more or less collapsed, and the lands emptied of people as they headed out to find urban centres, leaving only a few impoverished and addicted stragglers. In that scarcity, an order of monks arose (wandered in?) around values of ascetism, and their principles of meditation, etc saw them draw in many followers as a way of healing (and overcoming hunger and addiction). This monastery formed, and as people heard and came to them, a town formed around it. But at this monastery, attitudes around drugs are black and white—you must take a vow of sobriety. We are taught that drugs bring ruin to society. Outsiders brought drugs to these lands and it made people sluggish, useless, unable to participate in community.

My family came much later to this monastery. My grandparents, seeking a new pack after their own was annihilated in the war (on the offensive), and grandmother newly with child, stumbled upon this monastery were shown mercy in their passing (despite being part of the army that destroyed it in the first place), and saw a new life and way of being to be discovered. Like so many others, they were taken in and became part of this mixed society.

My father, first of the family to be born in this monastery town, apprenticed after a master potter, and became a master himself.

I’m a pack animal, and I love the monastery. I get to be with all my friends, we spar, we play. But as we grow older, we are told to release attachments. You are taught to look inward. Everyone becomes much more serious and stoic. People start to find me “annoying.” I find the ascetism to be stifling. I follow the school and want to be good, but it’s because I love all the people, and not because of the values. As people train more solo, I start to fall behind.

Meanwhile, dad is trying to teach me pottery, but I find it to be tedious. I hate solo activities. I can’t stay focused. And my dad is all but silent.

On the eve of my final test at the monastery, wherein if I pass, I will be inducted into the Way of the Open Hand. But if I fail, I will not be admitted, and my studies will not continue.

But one day, on the eve of my final test, a travelling band comes to town (Or something like that. Just, fun and loving modern people. Something to do with Alvyn Silverfrond?). They’re having such a good time, and their music is amazing. And they’re all draconic in origin (or not). I bust out my flute and start playing with them and have the best time, and that spirit of conviviality is reawakened in me and I feel alive again. They offer me some drugs (the good stuff, the plant medicine, the Indigenous plants of this land that have been recultivated)…and I know I should say no, but fuck it, there’s no chance I get into the Open Hand, and these people are really fun. I do the drugs, and suddenly I hit the flow state. I’m jamming and playing amazing music. I find my way back home and end up in the pottery shop and to my amazement, I can stay completely focused on the work. I stay up all night with my hands in the clay and create an excellent work, but remain so hyperfocused I don’t even realize the sun is coming up.

I go to my final test at the monastery…and I fucking kill it. I win all the combat contests, but I’m also tipsy swaying all over the place from exhaustion and with the drugs still in my system—unbeknownst to me, I’m discovering the principles of the Way of the Drunken Master, all on my own. I’ve won the tournament (or passed the solo test) but…my teacher berates me for my drug use. I try to explain that the drugs are not all we’ve been told they are…but it only raises his ire. My sifu gives me an option, pay penitence for my transgression and I can stay in the monastery, though I’ll never be inducted into the Way of the Open Hand, and basically be like…a janitor. It’s immensely humiliating, and everyone is kind of shocked by it, because it’s too strict a punishment for my crime. Or else I am banished not just from the monastery, but the town, and must take my questing elsewhere (it’s a coded, tough love, Asian kind of thing). At the time, I fail to understand. I feel like I did excellent, so why am I being punished? I’m heartbroken and angry, and I decide to leave. I am going to seek that band, or the followers of Alvyn Silverfrond, to learn more about their medicines and way of life and develop my own practice.

I go home to say a tearful goodbye to my parents. My dad will be furious. My mom will be humiliated.

My mom has wanted me to be a high achiever, and she’ll be devastated to hear I’ve been expelled (she’s like my personal grandma, who is a conformist to the max…just do whatever the preacher/master says). But with a grunt, my father turns my attention to the pot I created last night. I’ve finally done something he approves of. They send me away with my pot to the city, where I am to deliver my work to some people (some kind of Guild?), I dunno. My dad sends his stuff there. So off I go to do some strange little fetch quest for my parents…but also…this serves as a distraction because I didn’t have to tell them I was expelled!

But also I know…the company of those draconic folks, the substances…they didn’t make me sluggish. They made me feel alive. I felt the feelings I always thought I was meant to achieve at the monastery. That flow state. I could feel my ki in technicolour. There’s something to it, and I need to learn more. Because while I couldn’t always find the mysteries within, something tells me I can find them out there if I search. Oh also, I have to drop off this pot with some people in the City.

**ALIGNMENT:** I’ve gone true neutral here because…Kobolds tend to be Lawful Evil. They are pack animals, so they go with the flow…but because we are trained to follow our inner voice (and our own path), and I’ve discovered this internal logic of the drunken master…I’m now drawn to explore my more chaotic side. To play music, to experiment with medicines, etc.

And then our nature is to be “Evil,” which the book clarifies as “Selfish.” Perhaps that means “to the pack.” But I think social conditioning has bettered this part of our nature—growing up in the monastery. That said, a certain amount of dogma around substances, and an inability to accept that I might be different will have my character on a journey of questioning “hypocrisy”, or unfair systems. Perhaps he’s

**BACKGROUND:** I kind of like the idea that I’m a Guild Artisan, but pre-the description from [the rules](https://dnd5e.wikidot.com/background:guild-artisan). The Guild receives our work, and knows that my father, Dams Resnu, is the mysterious hermitic creator of the pots that no current living Guild member has met. In fact, his creations are masterworks that fetch huge sums in high society. Every once in a while, he sends a pot, and the monastery receives the money back. It’s actually a huge amount of money that gets distributed throughout the town economy.

But to me, he’s just my stern, silent dad who spends all day in his workshop and get grumpy with me when I don’t focus on my pottery-work. But when I get high and create that pot on the eve of my monastery test, my father recognizes that I’ve created my first masterwork—essentially my thesis project that marks the end of my apprenticeship. So he sends me with the pot to the Guild to be inducted into the society. I know nothing of that world, and he doesn’t tell me any of those details. So one day I will end up going into this Guild thinking I’m doing some fetch quest for my dad, and find out I’m actually a Guild member. I feel like there can be some sort of strangeness of a Kobold showing up here, and the Guild being surprised that we are the makers of these rare masterworks.

**THE MONASTERY:** I think there’s maybe something here about the Monastery being what the land needed in times of scarcity, but now that the world is modernizing, it’s kind of falling behind. It needs innovation. My sifu outwardly is the most conservative of the teachers…but he’s only pretending to be so to get into power. In fact, he wants to shake things up. When I discover my drunken master technique, he actually sees great potential in it, but cannot say so without compromising his own social standing. So…when he gives me the choice to face penitence and be allowed to stay in the monastery (but never be admitted to the Open Hand), the punishment is actually unfairly severe. He does this on purpose so that it becomes an impossible choice for me, and I am forced to turn my back on the monastery to pursue my own line of inquiry with the Way of the Drunken Master. His true hope is that I will go away and discover different truths about the way of the body and universe, and return one day enlightened, and in doing so, show a path to innovation, reinvention, and expansion for our people—so that we may integrate with these new movements (like the medicinal healing of the Alvyn Silverfrond folks) and break free from dogma and the calcified conservatism we find ourselves in now.

**CLASS FEATURE. DRACONIC SORCERY.** I get one free cantrip from the Sorcerer spell list. I was thinking Mage Hand could make sense as some kind of thing to use when you’re making your pots. Alternatively, monks get absolutely no ranged attack (except a couple darts, or a spear if you take a spear). I was thinking I could take a ranged damage cantrip like Chill Touch or Mind Needle and explain it as like an unpredictable part of my draconic background. Like, just this really nasty thing I can do that I was told not to because it’s bad, which I will start to embrace as part of my journey of self-discovery. Just having a hard time choosing between the utility or the combat.

If I could trade my Persuasion proficiency for Sleight of Hand (which also feels apt for a craftsman), then perhaps Mage Hand becomes more appealing, and is perhaps the more thematic option.