Way of the Four

Elements: Remastered

This is an upgraded and expanded version of the Way of the Four Elements subclass found in the Player’s Handbook. It seeks to correct the pitfalls of the printed subclass, bringing it up to par with its excellent brethren: Way of the Open Palm and Way of Shadows. The result should make for a more flavorful and enjoyable experience!

A quick summary of changes:

- Thematic elemental cantrips learned over time, granting access to flavorful non-combative abilities that do not require spending ki
- Double the elemental disciplines learned; two at each milestone instead of just one, adding much-needed versatility
- Brand new elemental disciplines to choose from, including spells from the Elemental Evil: Player’s Companion

Click here to read about the design philosophy and data comparison behind this remastering.

Initiate of the Way

When you choose this tradition at 3rd level, you learn how to manipulate the four elements in subtle ways. You learn two of the following cantrips: elemental attunement, gust*, mold earth*, control flames*, or shape water*. You learn one additional cantrip from this list at 6th, 11th, and 17th level.

* Spell located in Elemental Evil: Player’s Companion

Disciple of the Elements

At 3rd level, you learn magical disciplines that harness the power of the four elements. Some disciplines require you to spend ki points when you use it. You learn two elemental disciplines of your choice, which are detailed in the “Elemental Disciplines” section below. You learn two additional elemental disciplines of your choice at 6th, 11th, and 17th level.

Whenever you learn a new elemental discipline, you can also replace on elemental discipline that you already know with a different discipline. You cannot replace cantrips for elemental disciplines.

Casting Elemental Spells. Some elemental disciplines allow you to cast spells. See chapter 10 in the Player’s
Handbook for the general rules of spellcasting. To cast one of these spells, you use its casting time and other rules, but you don’t need to provide material components for it.

Adept of the Way
Once you reach the 5th level in this class, you can spend additional ki points to increase the level of an elemental discipline spell that you cast, provided that the spell has an enhanced effect at a higher level, as *burning hands* does. The spell’s level increases by 1 for each additional ki point you spend. For example, if you are a 5th-level monk and use *Sweeping Cinder Strike* to cast *burning hands*, you can spend 2 ki points to cast it as a 2nd-level spell (the discipline’s base cost of 1 ki point plus 1).

The maximum number of ki points you can spend to cast a spell in this way (including its base ki point cost and any additional ki points you spend to increase its level) is determined by your monk level, as shown in the Spells and Ki Points table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monk Levels</th>
<th>Maximum Ki Points for a Spell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th-8th</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th-12th</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th-16th</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th-20th</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Elemental Discipline List
Clicking on the elemental discipline will redirect you to its description.

3rd level
*Become the Teapot*: Cast *absorb elements*.
*Enduring Mountain Stance*: Dodge action makes you immovable.
*Fangs of the Fire Snake*: +5ft. reach when attacking, spend ki to deal extra fire damage.
*Fang of the Frost Wolf*: Cast *ice knife*.
*Fist of Four Thunders*: Cast *thunderwave*.
*Fist of Unbroken Air*: Deal damage in a line, pushback.
*Rumbling Badger*: Cast *earth tremor*.
*Rush of the Gale Spirits*: Cast *gust of wind*.
*Shape of the Flowing River*: Transform and reshape ice and water.
*Sweeping Cinder Strike*: Cast *burning hands*.
*Water Whip*: Deal damage to target, pull or knock prone.
*Unrelenting Flames*: Reroll 1’s on damage dice.

6th level
*Burnning Ember Flourish*: Cast *pyrotechnics*.
*Clench of the North Wind*: Cast *hold person*.

Crushing Hand of the Mountain: Cast *maximilian’s earthen grasp*.
*Eyes of Fire*: Gain infravision for 1min.
*Gong of the Summit*: Cast *shatter*.
*Golden Snake’s Icy Path*: Movement after Dash action leaves trail of difficult terrain.
*Hatchling’s Flame*: Cast *aganazzar’s scorcher*.
*Howl of the North Wind*: Cast *warding wind*.
*I am a Leaf on the Wind*: Slow Fall now activates automatically, gain ability to glide.
*Impenetrable Iron Tortoise Shell*: Deflect Missiles ability now can be used on any ranged/melee attack within 30 feet.
*Mote of the Sun*: Cast *flaming sphere*.
*Patient Badger Listens*: Gain tremorsense and burrow speed for 1min.
*Red Dragon’s Claws*: Cast *scorching ray*.
*Swarming Ice Rabbit*: Cast *snilloc’s snowball swarm*.

11th level
*Dance of Three Ways*: Cast *melf’s minute meteors*.
*Earth Reaches for Sky*: Cast *erupting earth*.
*Eternal Mountain Defense*: Cast *stoneskin*, targeting yourself.
*Falling Comet*: Cast *sleet storm*.
*Flames of the Phoenix*: Cast *fireball*.
*Fist of the Elements*: Cast *elemental weapon*, choosing either cold, fire, or thunder.
*Hua’s Water Prison*: Cast *watery sphere*.
*Ice Storm*: Cast *ice storm*.
*Mist Stance*: Cast *gaseous form*.
*One with the Tides*: Gain underwater adaptions for 8 hours.
*Raise the Still Waters*: Cast *wall of water*.
*Raise the Troubled Earth*: Cast *wall of sand*.
*Ride the Wind*: Cast *fly*.
*River of Hungry Flame*: Cast *wall of fire*.
*Sweeping Crosswind*: Cast *wind wall*.
*Tidal Wave*: Cast *tidal wave*.

17th level
*Avatar of the Elements*: Cast *investiture of [element]*.
*Breath of Winter*: Cast *cone of cold*.
*Changing the Tide*: Redirect a missed attack against you to an adjacent creature.
*Eye of the Hurricane*: Cast *control winds*.
*Mold the Mountain*: Cast *transmute rock*.
*Moth’s Demise*: Cast *immolation*.
*Swirling Crab’s Revenge*: Cast *maelstrom*.
*Wave of Rolling Earth*: Cast *wall of stone*.

* Spell located in Elemental Evil: Player’s Companion
3rd Level Elemental Disciplines

**Become the Teapot**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Reaction  
Range: Self  
Duration: 1 round

You roll with the incoming energy, attuning to element, becoming it.

You can spend 1 ki point to cast absorb elements*.

**Effortless Step**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Jump  
Range: Self  
Duration: Permanent

The air around you works in unison with your movements, rising you up as you jump.

Your jump height and distance are doubled (quadrupled with Step of the Wind) and you gain advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks related to jumping.

**Enduring Mountain Stance**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Dodge action  
Range: Self  
Duration: Until the start of your next turn

As you center yourself, your body and mind becomes as rigid and unyielding as the ground below you. Your ki roots your feet into the ground and you become immovable.

When you use the Dodge action, you cannot be moved, pushed, grappled, frightened, or knocked prone against your will until the start of your next turn, even if magically compelled to do so. You must be standing on the ground to use this ability.

**Fangs of the Fire Snake**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Attack action  
Range: Self  
Duration: End of turn

Your arms and legs become enveloped in roaring gouts of flame. As you strike out with your limbs, tendrils of flames stretch out beyond your normal reach to scorch your foes.

When you use the Attack action on your turn, you can initiate this maneuver to cause tendrils of flame to stretch out from your fists and feet. Your reach with your unarmed strikes increases by 5 feet for that action, as well as the rest of the turn. A hit with such an attack deals fire damage instead of bludgeoning damage, and if you spend 1 ki point when the attack hits, it also deals an extra 1d10 fire damage.

**Fang of the Frost Wolf**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 60 feet  
Duration: Instantaneous

You summon a shard of razor-sharp ice and fling it at your foe.

You can spend 1 ki point to cast ice knife*.

**Fist of Four Thunders**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: Self (15-foot cube)  
Duration: Instantaneous

You slam your fists together in front of you, causing a thunderous boom that blows away everything around you.

You can spend 1 ki point to cast thunderwave.

**Fist of Unbroken Air**
Level: Monk 3  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 30 feet  
Duration: Instantaneous

You summon a swirling wind and concentrate it around your fist. You then throw a punch in the direction of your foe with that fist, sending mighty blast of compressed air at the target.

As an action, you can spend 2 ki points and choose a creature within 30 feet of you. That creature must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes bludgeoning damage equal to 2d10 + your Wisdom modifier + twice your monk level, plus an extra 2d10 bludgeoning damage for each additional ki point spent, and you can push the creature up to 20 feet away from you and knock it prone. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage and you don’t push it or knock
it prone.

**Rumbling Badger**

*Level:* Monk 3  
*Initiation Action:* Action  
*Range:* Self (10-foot radius)  
*Duration:* Instantaneous

You shake the ground, causing a tremor that knocks over your foes.

You can spend 1 ki point to cast *earth tremor*.

**Rush of the Gale Spirits**

*Level:* Monk 3  
*Initiation Action:* Action  
*Range:* Self (60-foot line)  
*Duration:* Concentration, up to 1 minute

You send a blast of air outward with a thrust of your open palm.

You can spend 1 ki point to cast *gust of wind*.

**Shape of the Flowing River**

*Level:* Monk 3  
*Initiation Action:* Action  
*Range:* 120 feet  
*Duration:* Permanent

You touch the body of water with your ki, coaxing it to change its form.

As an action, you can spend 1 ki point to choose an area of ice or water no larger than 30 feet on a side within 120 feet of you. You can change water to ice within the area and vice versa, and you can reshape ice in the area in any manner you choose. You can raise or lower the ice's elevation, create or fill in a trench, erect or flatten a wall, or form a pillar. The extent of any such changes can't exceed half the area's largest dimension. For example, if you affect a 30-foot square, you can create a pillar up to 15 feet high, raise or lower the square's elevation by up to 15 feet, dig a trench up to 15 feet deep, and so on. You can't shape...
the ice to trap or injure a creature in the area.

**Sweeping Cinder Strike**

**Level:** Monk 3  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** Self (15 feet)  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

With wide sweeping gestures, you summon forth a blazing sphere of flame. With a quick strike, the sphere explodes outward, showering your foes in front of your with a barrage of hot cinders.

You spend 1 ki point to cast *burning hands*.

**Water Whip**

**Level:** Monk 3  
**Initiation Action:** Bonus Action  
**Range:** 30 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You summon a long, rubbery whip of pure water that you grip by one end. You lash out at your foe, sending the whip crashing down on the creature.

You can spend 1 ki point as a bonus action to create a whip of water that shoves and pulls a creature to unbalance it. A creature that you can see that is within 30 feet of you must make a Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes bludgeoning damage equal to 1d10 + your Wisdom modifier + your monk level, plus an extra 1d10 bludgeoning damage for each additional ki point you spend, and you can either knock it prone or pull it up to 25 feet closer to you. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage, and you don't pull it or knock it prone.

**Unrelenting Flames**

**Level:** Monk 3  
**Initiation Action:** None  
**Range:** Self (15 feet)  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

Your fiery ki infuses all your strikes, making them hit harder.

Whenever you roll a 1 on a damage die for an attack you make, including attacks made with weapons or spells, you can reroll the die. You must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1.

**6th Level Elemental Disciplines**

**Burning Ember Flourish**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 60 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You reach out with your ki to snuff out a source of fire, causing it to go out with a bang or to sputter black smoke.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast *pyrotechnics*.

**Clench of the North Wind**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 60 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute.

You clench an outward hand at the creature as if you were squeezing its heart in your palm. Your foe freezes in place, paralyzed by your grasp.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast *hold person*.

**Crushing Hand of the Mountain**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 30 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You focus your strength into your outstretched fist, summoning a hand of earth from the ground to squeeze the life out of your foes.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast *maximilian's earthen grasp*.

**Eyes of Fire**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Bonus action  
**Range:** Self  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your eyes glow red as you scan the area, seeing the heat sources around you as clearly as light sources.

You may spend 2 ki points to gain magical infravision for 1 minute with a range of 60 feet. This infravision allows you to magically see any heat source within range, revealing the size, location, and general form of each heat source, but not any other details. This ability reveals heat sources that are invisible, hidden, obscured, or located on the other
side of walls or other barriers you could not normally see through. However, the ability does not allow you to see through magical darkness, ice, snow, or water, and does not function on creatures that do not produce any heat, such as undead and constructs.

**Golden Snake’s Icy Path**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Dash action  
**Range:** 60 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

As you dash along the battlefield, you leave a trail of slippery ice.

Whenever you take the Dash action, until end of turn any movement you make along a surface leaves a trail of slippery ice. This ice counts as difficult terrain and lasts until the start of your next turn.

**Gong of the Summit**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 30 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You focus your ki into a burning aura of energy that manifests as a seething sphere. After a moment, the sphere bursts into a torrent of energy that races in a line away from you.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast aganazzar’s scorcher*.

**Howl of the Hurricane**

**Level:** Monk 6  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 60 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

As you perform quick gestures with your hands, a shimmering magical gong appears. You finish the gestures with a strike in the direction of the gong, causing a painfully intense ringing noise in its vicinity.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast shatter.
**Initiation Action**: Action
**Range**: Self
**Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You let out a fierce howl as a mighty wind begins swirling around you, blowing away the opposition.

You can spend 2 ki to cast warding wind*.

---

**I AM A LEAF ON THE WIND**

**Level**: Monk 6

**Initiation Action**: Slow Fall

**Range**: Self

**Duration**: Instantaneous

A powerful wind rises up to catch you as you fall, carrying you safely to the ground.

Your Slow Fall ability no longer requires a reaction to use, and instead you may use it automatically whenever you are conscious and not incapacitated, and it negates all falling damage regardless of distance. When you use the Slow Fall ability, you may also glide along the air to move 5 feet in any horizontal direction for every 5 feet that you fall.

---

**IMPEMERTRABLE IRON TORTOISE SHELL**

**Level**: Monk 6

**Initiation Action**: Deflect Missiles

**Range**: 30 feet

**Duration**: Instantaneous

You summon a momentary barrier of earth to defend yourself or an ally.

As a reaction, you may spend 2 point of ki to use your Deflect Missiles ability on any ranged or melee attack you can see within 30 feet of you. Any damage not prevented by this ability is taken by the original target of the attack.

---

**MOTE OF THE SUN**

**Level**: Monk 6

**Initiation Action**: Action

**Range**: 60 feet

**Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your fiery ki manifests as a floating sphere of roaring flame, searing everything in its path.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast flaming sphere.

---

**RED DRAGON’S CLAWS**

**Level**: Monk 6

**Initiation Action**: Action

**Range**: 120 feet

**Duration**: Instantaneous

Rays of fire spring from your outstretched hand to sear your foes.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast scorching ray.

---

**SWARMING ICE RABBIT**

**Level**: Monk 6

**Initiation Action**: Action

**Range**: 30 feet

**Duration**: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A flurry of magic snowballs erupts from a point you choose within range.

You can spend 2 ki points to cast snilloc’s snowball swarm*.

---

**11TH LEVEL ELEMENTAL DISCIPLINES**

---

**DANCE OF THREE WAYS**

**Level**: Monk 11

**Initiation Action**: Action

**Range**: Self

**Duration**: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You summon six spheres of earth from the ground, suspend them in the air around you, and ignite them with your fiery ki. With but a thought, you launch these blazing meteors at your foe.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast melf’s minute meteors*.
Earth Reaches for Sky
Level: Monk 11
Initiation Action: Action
Range: 120 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

Focusing your strength with a deep, rumbling shout, you swing your arms up high, causing an eruption of churned earth and stone that engulfs your foes.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast erupting earth*.  

Eternal Mountain Defense
Level: Monk 11
Initiation Action: Action
Range: Self
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour.

Your body hardens to stone, turning otherwise lethal blows from weapons into manageable scrapes.

You can spend 4 ki points to cast stoneskin, targeting yourself.

Falling Comet
Level: Monk 11
Initiation Action: Action
Range: 150 feet
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast sleet storm.

Flames of the Phoenix
Level: Monk 11
Initiation Action: Action
Range: 150 feet
Duration: Instantaneous

You place your index and middle finger on your forehead, then thrust those two fingers outward, sending a tiny bead of concentrated energy at the target. When it connects, the bead blossoms with a bird-like screech into an explosion.
of flame.

You spend 3 ki points to cast fireball.

**Fist of the Elements**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: Self  
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour.

The elements swirl around your weapon, imbuing it with devastating power.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast elemental weapon, choosing from only the damage types cold, fire, or thunder.

**Hua’s Water Prison**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 90 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You can spend 4 ki to cast watery sphere*.

**Ice Storm**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 300 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast ice storm.

**Mist Stance**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: Self  
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

A swirling mist envelopes your body and you merge with it, turning into a misty cloud.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast gaseous form, targeting yourself.

**One with the Tides**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: Self  
Duration: 8 hours

You reach out with your ki and touch the surrounding water, merging with it on a spiritual level. Your deep understanding of it allows you to swim faster, breathe, and even sense other creatures touching the water.

You spend 2 point of ki as an action to gain underwater adaptations for 8 hours. While this ability is active, you can breath normally underwater, you gain a swim speed equal to your modified land speed, and you gain blindsight with a range of 60 feet while underwater.

**Raise the Troubled Earth**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 90 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You can spend 3 ki to cast wall of sand*.

**Raise the Still Waters**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 60 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You can spend 3 ki to cast wall of water*.

**Ride the Wind**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: Self  
Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You summon a mighty wind that envelopes your body, sweeping you over to where you want to go.

You spend 3 ki points to cast fly, targeting yourself, except your fly speed is equal to your enhanced movement speed.

**River of Hungry Flame**
Level: Monk 11  
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 120 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You sweep your hands upward, causing a wall of blazing hot fire to leap up from the ground.

You can spend 4 ki points to cast wall of fire.

**Sweeping Crosswind**
Level: Monk 11
Initiation Action: Action  
Range: 120 feet  
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour.

A wall of strong wind rises from the ground, batting away anything in its path.

You can spend 3 ki points to cast wind wall.

**Tidal Wave**  
**Level:** Monk 11  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 120 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You can spend 3 ki to cast tidal wave*.

**Avatar of the Elements**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** Self  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

As an ultimate display of your mastery of the elements, you merge your ki with your chosen primordial power. The element envelopes your body, becoming an extension of yourself. You have become an avatar of the elements.

When you learn this elemental discipline, choose one of the following spells: *investiture of flame*, *investiture of ice*, *investiture of stone*, or *investiture of wind*. You can spend 8 ki points to cast the chosen spell. You can learn this elemental discipline multiple times, choosing a different spell each time.

---

**17th Level Elemental Disciplines**
**Breath of Winter**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** Self (60-foot cone)  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You inhale deeply and then exhale, blasting a cone of frigid air out in front of you that freezes everything in its path.

You can spend 5 ki points to cast *cone of cold*.

**Changing the Tide**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Reaction  
**Range:** 5 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You flow like water, guiding an attack against you to a nearby enemy.

When a creature that you can see targets you with an attack and either misses or you pass your saving throw, you may spend 1 ki point to redirect that attack to another creature within 5 feet of you as a reaction. Use the result of the creature’s attack roll or save DC to determine if the redirected attack hits the new target.

**Eye of the Hurricane**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 300 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 hour

You stretch out your ki to embrace the winds.

You can spend 5 ki points to cast *control winds*.

**Mold the Mountain**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 120 feet  
**Duration:** Instantaneous

You can spend 5 ki to cast *transmute rock*.

**Moth’s Demise**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 90 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You mentally reach out and ignite your foe’s ki. The creature’s body briefly glows with a brilliant internal fire before the flames erupt and envelope its body.

You can spend 5 ki points to cast *immolation*.

**Swirling Crab’s Revenge**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 120 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 1 minute

You can spend 5 ki points to cast *maelstrom*.

**Wave of Rolling Earth**  
**Level:** Monk 17  
**Initiation Action:** Action  
**Range:** 120 feet  
**Duration:** Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You pull forth ki deep within your center and thrust it upward. The ground shakes and emits a low rumble as a wall of stone erupts up into being.

You can spend 5 ki points to cast *Wall of Stone*.  

---

*These spells are marked with an asterisk (*) and require a PHB subscription for full access.*
**Why A Remastering?**

D&D Next is a tremendous step forward in terms of sleek design and balance in comparison to third edition. The monk class is a prime example of this, being leaps and bounds better than its 3e counterpart. We also have two great subclasses: Way of the Open Palm and Way of Shadow. Both Ways offer a sweet flair to the monk, adding unique abilities and augmenting base abilities. Way of Shadow in particular strikes me as incredibly well-designed, granting a plethora of abilities that greatly boost both exploration/sneaking and combat potency, making you really feel like a badass ninja both inside and out of combat.

So it’s unfortunate that Way of the Four Elements, my favorite subclass from a fluff perspective, ended up so lackluster in comparison. This is a sentiment held by many players and Wizards themselves have acknowledged hearing dissatisfaction with the monk’s Way of the Four Elements option.

The purpose of the remastering is not to make an overpowered subclass, but a fun subclass that I and others would want to play.

**Problems & Solutions**

There are multiple issues with the Way of the Four Elements. This redesign of the subclass tries to address each of them:

**Too Much Ki Spending**

As Wizards said themselves, “feedback indicates that the path focuses too much on adding more ways to spend ki points, rather than giving new options that a monk can use without tapping into that resource.” This is definitely true: all but one elemental discipline requires spending ki points. This is in stark contrast to every other subclass out there, including the Way of Shadow and Way of the Open Palm, which offer new abilities that do not eat up pre-existing resources. That’s not just a balance issue but a fun issue: if all your Elemental features require ki points, you don’t get to feel like an Elemental monk once those ki points run out.

**Solution:** Offer some abilities that do not expend ki. This is an easy solution. I’ve added more flavorful cantrips known (which Wizards calls “ribbons”) and a few new elemental disciplines that offer minor benefits but do not expend ki points.

**Lack of Variety**

There are 17 total elemental disciplines to choose from. Not terribly low, but considering the sheer variety of Fire / Earth / Water (Ice) / Air (Thunder) elemental spells out there, it seems needlessly restrictive. Few, if any, elemental spells are “broken” in the hands of a monk, especially when the monk is already restricted to learning a single spell per milestone.

Because of this, it was very disappointing when the Elemental Evil Player’s Companion, which was all about elemental spells, offered nothing to the Way of the Four Elements.

**Solution:** Increase the amount of elemental disciplines available to choose from. Many of the new elemental spells from Elemental Evil that fit the monk’s theme (no lightning, acid, etc.) have been added as new options.

**Too Few Disciplines Known**

Way of the Four Elements is lacking in disciplines known. At third level, they learn Elemental Attunement, essentially a cantrip, and one other elemental discipline. Compare that to Way of Shadow, which at third level knows four spells and the minor illusion cantrip. That means at third level, Way of Shadow knows as many spells as Way of the Four Elements will know at level 17! This isn’t a case of Shadow being too good, but rather Elements not getting enough.

**Solution:** Add more elemental disciplines known. I doubled the amount known, increasing it from 1 per milestone to 2 per milestone. Elements now learn additional cantrips, so they always have a neat subclass “ribbon” to use.

**Disciplines Cost Too Much Ki**

Another oddity about Elements is that a spell costs its spell level +1 in ki points. On the other hand, Shadows’ spell costs are equal to just its spell level in ki points. *Wizards commented* that this pricing disparity is because Shadows’ spells “...are designed to serve a highly specialized function,” but I strongly disagree with this logic, as the beauty of Shadows’ spell arsenal is that it’s versatile; you can use Silence or Darkness both to help you sneak around undetected or to shut down foes in combat. Meanwhile, the Elemental is getting a single spell, like the incredibly niche Gust of Wind, and has to cast it for double the ki cost. Which is the more specialized spell again?

**Solution:** The ki point cost of spells is equal to its spell level, instead of spell level +1. It’s fair and brings it in line with Shadows’ costs.

**Imbalanced Elemental Disciplines**

Elements get a few brand new abilities, but the balance
on them is all over the place. Compare, for example, Fist of Unbroken Air to Water Whip. Fist costs an action, 2 ki points, has a 30 foot range, and on a failed save deals 3d10 damage plus pushes the creature 20 feet away and knocks it prone. Water Whip also costs 2 ki points, has a 30 foot range, deals 3d10 damage, and either pulls or knocks down but not both. But the main difference is that Water Whip is a mere bonus action! That makes it way better than Fist.

The other two new abilities are interesting but fairly weak, especially for their ki cost. Remember, at each milestone you get a single discipline: it sucks when your choices are crummy.

**Solution:** Rebalance the elemental disciplines. This is a bit harder, but with the magic of math and common sense, I gave it a shot.

### Behind the Crunchy Bits

There’s no perfect formula in D&D to figure out the exact balance of abilities. But when we’re comparing new attack options, specifically ones that primarily deal damage, we can get pretty technical in terms of tuning balance.

When evaluating an alternative combat option, we can compare it to the monk’s baseline combat option: Attack action to hit one/two times, plus the Bonus action unarmed strikes granted by Martial Arts or Flurry of Blows. Let’s use Bob, your average monk that uses standard point buy and has a starting Dexterity of 16 (+3). Bob adds +2 to his DEX at 4th and 8th level. His average damage during his attack routine looks like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Attack action</th>
<th>Unarmed Strike (Flurry)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.5 (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.5 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5 (21)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At level 3, Bob is doing 12 damage on average with an attack action plus bonus action unarmed strike, or 17.5 damage if he spends a ki point to use Flurry of Blows. Keep in mind that he can only use his bonus action to strike / FoB if he attacks, so if he casts a spell instead of attacking, it effectively costs him the chance of followup bonus action damage.

Elemental disciplines that offer new attack options must be worth using (at least sometimes) over the baseline attack option.

Example 1: At level 3, Bob spends 2 ki points to use Fist of Unbroken Air as an action. It deals 16.5 damage on average, at superior range, and both pushes and knocks prone. Alternatively, Bob could’ve spent 1 ki point to use an attack action + FoB, dealing 17.5 damage. First of Unbroken Air costs 1 more ki for additional range, CC, and -1 damage. This makes Fist situational but alright. Unfortunately, by 6th level, Fist is doing half the damage of Bob’s attack + FoB routine, quickly making the discipline obsolete and a poor choice to learn. Therefore Fist of Unbroken Air could use a boost.

Example 2: At 3rd level, Bob spends 2 ki points to use Water Whip as a bonus action. It deals 16.5 damage on average, at superior range, and either pulls or knocks prone. Alternatively, Bob could’ve spent 1 ki point to use FoB, dealing 11 damage. Water Whip costs 1 more ki for additional range, CC, and +5 damage. It continues to remain relevant at higher levels, dealing +1.5 damage at 6th and -2.5 damage at 11th, not drastic differences. This makes Water Whip a worthy choice as an elemental discipline.

Things get murkier when you’re trying to evaluate abilities that the monk has no equivalent option for; specifically, passive bonuses or new utility. In general, though, no ability should outshine features from Way of the Open Hand or Way of Shadow. For example, no passive bonus should make Flurry of Blows as good as Open Hand Technique, nor should there be any sneaky utility spells as good as Way of Shadows.

**Special Thanks**

This remastering was spawned from a crowdsourced thread over [here](#). The design goals, balancing tweaks, and many of the abilities were all built together by multiple people, including (but not limited to): Person_Man, Mr.Moron, Easy_Lee, ad_hoc, not_a_fish, Shaofoo, Shining Wrath, Sindeloke, MadBear, Hawkstar, WunSukong, silveralen, and Kryx

Thank you to the Reddit community for helping tune the first draft, addressing balance concerns, creating new disciplines, and hammering out the final touches of design goals. Big shoutout to Reddit user Starlight_Hypnotic for keeping things in check and not letting me get away with crazy overpowered stuff.