The Magaambya

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The Magaambya is perhaps the greatest and oldest academy of magic in the world, and its students know they are supported by the strength of thousands of students who’ve come before them. History, magical lore, and much more can be found within the walls of the school, but students of the Magaambya aren’t confined to the campus. They are expected to learn from, and share knowledge with, the wider world—and that wider world has plenty of adventure to offer!
Listen, for this is a story that means something. The devastation of Earthfall resulted in the deaths of too many people to count, and the obliteration of civilizations erased much of humanity’s knowledge. The man credited with bringing magic back to humanity was Old-Mage Jatembe, a folk hero and a myth to the people of the Mwangi Expanse. During the Age of Anguish that followed Earthfall, Old-Mage Jatembe and his students, the Ten Magic Warriors, traveled the Mwangi Expanse and beyond to deliver lore and, with it, hope. Perhaps the greatest and most long lasting of Jatembe’s achievements was founding the oldest—and perhaps the greatest—magic school in the world, the Magaambya.

The Magaambya
To this day the Magaambya strives to spread the same knowledge and hope that Old-Mage Jatembe and the Ten Magic Warriors did long ago. Teaching a blend of arcane and primal traditions, the Magaambya aims to do more than educate wizards and druids; it hopes to act in service for all of Golarion.

RANKS
The hierarchy of the Magaambya is as old as the school itself. Newcomers begin as initiates. Initiates engage in a period of public service called a Perquisite before they become attendants. Attendants receive a wooden mask (typically in the form of an animal, and typically crafted by the student) that holds a fragment of the student’s spirit and reflects their spirit face. Those attendants who have shown enough self-direction to serve the school more broadly become conversants. Conversants range farther from the school, advancing its interests as they advance their own education. After demonstrating sufficient mastery of Magaambyan techniques, a conversant becomes a lore-speaker. Many lore-speakers become teachers at the Magaambya, shepherding the knowledge of still more students. In this way, every generation of students at the Magaambya builds upon the strength of thousands of teachers and students who have come before them.

You have come to the Magaambya as a prospective initiate, but you will rise through the ranks, and your might is destined to be legendary.

BRANCHES
Magaambyan scholars believe in many fundamental values of scholarship. Key among them are adaptability, camaraderie, imagination, knowledge, and valor. The school’s faculty and lessons are divided into five branches, each emphasizing one of these values.

Cascade Bearers esteem imagination, from the dreams of the most visionary magical theorists to the innovations of creative problem-solvers of all stripes.
Emerald Boughs emphasize camaraderie, the sense of community and connection to fellow Magaambys; they also interact with those outside the Magaambya and spread the academy's message.

Rain-Scribes value adaptability in thoughts and deeds, as well as a willingness to admit errors and learn from past mistakes.

Tempest-Sun Mages inspire valor, not only the physical courage to stand up for friends and the school, but also the intellectual courage to consider opposing viewpoints and widen one's understanding rather than staying entrenched in a single paradigm.

Uzunjati understand that knowledge lives in stories passed down through the generations and also is earned every day through personal experience.

Each student joins one primary branch to shape their academic understanding, but all Magaambys are expected to embody these values to varying degrees, and members of the different branches work together on and off campus.

You should choose a branch that's the primary focus of your character. Most of your class study is focused on advancing your knowledge in this primary branch. You should also choose a secondary branch that supplements your education, as you'll advance in this secondary branch as well. It's fine—in fact, it's preferred—if the characters have a variety of branches.

You'll advance your branch knowledge by attending classes during downtime, between (and amid) your adventures. Your GM has all the rules for the academia subsystem detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic* and is encouraged to share the specific rules they plan to use with you.

**Coming Together**

The Strength of Thousands Adventure Path begins as the player characters arrive at the Magaambya, located at the heart of the cosmopolitan city Nantambu. This academy of magic will be the heroes’ home throughout their adventures. Although they must remain close to the Magaambya during their initial lessons, they will soon venture far from the campus and gain greater and greater responsibilities.

Children are rare at the Magaambya; most students are adults, even if they have only recently become adults. In this Adventure Path, our assumption is that all of the player characters (and all NPCs, unless stated otherwise) are adults.

Prospective students come from all over the world to study at the Magaambya, so it’s unlikely that the heroes knew each other before arriving here—but they might! Incoming students form into cohorts, groups of students that support and learn from each other throughout their attendance. The heroes constitute one of these cohorts, and are thus expected to spend much of their time together. A cohort works best when its members have a wide variety of specializations and interests. Rather than a typical “adventuring party,” the heroes of the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path are a cohort of diverse and dedicated students.

**Alignments**

The Magaambya is focused on gathering knowledge and using it to become wardens of the world. The school's overall alignment is neutral good. This doesn’t mean the heroes must all be neutral good, but evil characters are a poor fit. Knowledge seekers come in all types, though, so no alignments are prohibited.

**Classes**

This campaign focuses on a magical school, but that doesn’t mean everyone has to play a spellcaster! Members of any class will have plenty of moments to shine in the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path. There will definitely be moments of danger where having a dedicated warrior, such as a fighter, monk, or swashbuckler, will prove vital. Rangers will shine when traveling through wilderness or exploring old ruins, and the keen eye for detail that a rogue or investigator can provide will be very useful.

**Spellcasting for Everyone**

Even though any class works well in the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path, a campaign where students attend a magic school wouldn’t seem very magical unless all the heroes can cast spells! Each character in this Adventure Path gains either the druid
multiclass archetype (Pathfinder Core Rulebook 225) or wizard multiclass archetype (Core Rulebook 231) to reflect the primal and arcane teaching traditions of the school, respectively. Druids must select the wizard multiclass archetype and wizards must select the druid multiclass archetype, but characters of other classes can choose either. This choice is made at 2nd level, so you have a little time to decide. You don’t need to meet the ability score prerequisite for your chosen archetype, but it’s a good idea to choose the druid archetype if your character’s Wisdom is higher than their Intelligence, and the wizard archetype if Intelligence is higher. Remember that the druid multiclass archetype comes with anathema acts, which reflect your role as a scholar of the wild and a warden of nature.

This multiclass archetype is a free archetype, as described on page 194 of the Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide. Each character receives an extra class feat at 2nd level and every even-numbered level thereafter, but can only use these extra class feats on archetype feats for the multiclass archetype you chose. This free multiclass archetype doesn’t prevent you from picking up a different dedication feat; that is, you don’t need to take two feats from your chosen multiclass archetype before picking up another archetype’s dedication feat with your normal class feats, if you find an archetype that fits your character concept.

Of course, you don’t need to pick up another archetype if you don’t want to, but suitable archetypes for you to consider for your character include halcyon speaker (Lost Omens Character Guide 104), loremaster (Pathfinder Advanced Player’s Guide 179), and magic warrior (Lost Omens World Guide 95).

ANCESTRIES

The Magaambya has a startling variety of ancestries among its professors and within its student body, so there are no restrictions on character ancestries in the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path. The people of Nantambu and the Magaambya are predominantly Zenj humans, but most are worldly enough that they’ve seen, known, and worked alongside many other ancestries in the past. Lost Omens Mwangi Expanse provides information about new and existing ancestries that are more common in the region, but students at the Magaambya sometimes come from much further away. Even uncommon or rare ancestries, if permitted by your GM, are fine choices for this campaign. People at the Magaambya might be initially put off by truly weird-looking or inhuman ancestries, but they’re quick to judge people by their actions, not their looks.

LANGUAGES

The assumption of a common language is useful for any campaign, and the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path is no different. In this campaign, references to the “Common” language refer to Mwangi rather than Taldane. When you gain Common as a default starting language, consider it to be Mwangi. You can learn Taldane, but you won’t have a lot of use for it. Other useful languages to pick up include Draconic and Sylvan. People in Nantambu have a local language called Xanmba, which you might also learn.

SKILLS AND FEATS

The heroes will perform best if their party contains a well-rounded selection of skills and feats. Arcana and Nature are the most important skills for successful scholastic endeavors at the Magaambya, as its focus is teaching arcane and primal traditions of magic. Religion and Occultism are also useful, as they touch on the other types of magic. Social skills such as Diplomacy, Deception, and Intimidation are useful because Magaambyans are expected to go out into the world to serve as emissaries and diplomats, and you’ll find there are many conflicts that can resolved with calm words rather than swinging blades. The best Lore skills for this Adventure Path include Academia Lore, Magaambya Lore, and Nantambu Lore, but many other Lore skills (particularly those of far-flung cities like Mzali) might come into play. Feats to consider include Arcane Sense, Automatic Knowledge, Canny Acumen, Quick Identification, and Recognize Spell.

Additionally, the academia rules presented in Pathfinder Adventure Path #169: Kindled Magic provide you with additional skills and feats based on
your branch. With the skill training you’ll get from your free archetype and the academia rules, you’ll likely end up with a character who possesses a very wide range of skills—as if he were a student of the world!

**BACKGROUNDS**

Heroes can select any common background they’d like for the Strength of Thousands Adventure Path. People come from all walks of life to join the Magaambya, after all. Page 94 of the *Lost Omens World Guide* has several suitable backgrounds for characters from the Mwangi Expanse, and if you choose the Magaambya Academic background, you’re already somewhat familiar with the school. Among the backgrounds presented in the *Core Rulebook*, the best choices are acolyte, emissary, herbalist, hermit, noble, or scholar.

Most prospective students come with a sponsorship, or a recommendation, from someone who’s already affiliated with the Magaambya. You can decide what that is yourself, or take one of the following new uncommon backgrounds to define the particular type of sponsorship your character has obtained. Each background also has a recommended branch, but you’re free to choose any branch you’d like.

**SPONSORED BY FAMILY BACKGROUND**

Several members of your family have studied at the Magaambya, although not all of them have graduated as lore-speakers (or even advanced past initiates to become attendants). Your family has decided that you’re an excellent candidate to join their ranks. Although lore-speakers of the Magaambya know they are supported by the strength of thousands of graduates who have come before them, you can take the smaller, more personal comfort in the support of your family.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You’re trained in your choice of the Diplomacy or Society skill. You gain a skill feat: Hobnobber if you chose Diplomacy or Eye for Numbers (*Advanced Player’s Guide* 206) if you chose Society. You’re also trained in Magaambya Lore.

Your recommended primary branch is the Uzunjati.

**SPONSORED BY TEACHER OT BACKGROUND**

You have known the Magaambyan teacher Takulu Ot and his wife Niana for many years. Both are amateur bird-watchers and musicians, and you share one of these hobbies. They are pleasant people and well-regarded in Nantambu, although their unshakable generosity and friendliness strike cynics as too earnest to be genuine. You know otherwise; Takulu and Niana are just as sincere as they appear. Takulu always seemed to watch you with a discerning eye, and one day he idly observed that you’d do well at the Magaambya. Talking about it further with him, Takulu agreed that he would sponsor you personally and be the one to give your intake interview. With a twinkle in his eye, he asked that you call him Teacher Ot from now on, just as all of his students do.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Wisdom or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You’re trained in your choice of the Survival or Performance skill. You gain a skill feat: Survey Wildlife if you chose Survival or Impressive Performance if you chose Performance. You’re also trained in Nantambu Lore.

Your recommended primary branch is the Emerald Boughs.

**SPONSORED BY A STRANGER BACKGROUND**

You remember the day the stranger approached you to make several peculiar inquiries. You don’t remember much about them, other than a large head and a frail body. At first, the stranger’s questions seemed odd: how might forgotten history nevertheless shape the present, whether an insect hive mind could be manipulated at a distance, and so on. You don’t remember all of the questions, and you don’t know why you could refuse to answer some but felt compelled to answer others. The stranger nevertheless seemed pleased with your responses and insisted you would find study at the Magaambya enlightening. You never saw them again, but you’re now here at the Magaambya, with more questions than answers about your future.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You’re trained in your choice of the Occultism or Nature skill. You gain your choice of the Dubious
Knowledge or Quick Identification skill feat. You’re also trained in Insect Lore.

Your recommended primary branch is the Rain-Scribes.

**SPONSORED BY A VILLAGE BACKGROUND**

**UNCOMMON**

You come from a small community far from any large cities, but the Magaambya is known even in your isolated corner of the world. You have shown more scholarly talent than anyone from your village in many years, perhaps even generations, and the village elders have insisted you explore your potential at the Magaambya. Whether you were eager to leave or not seemed irrelevant to the elders; you had the talent, so you must go. You don’t know how the elders had the connections or influence to sponsor your education there, but you’ve left your tight-knit community behind for the city of Nantambu and the Magaambya at its heart.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Intelligence or Wisdom, and one is a free ability boost.

You’re trained in your choice of the Crafting or Survival skill. You gain a skill feat: Crafter’s Appraisal (Advanced Player’s Guide 205) if you chose Crafting or Forager if you chose Survival. You’re also trained in the Lore skill appropriate for the terrain around your community (such as Forest Lore or Jungle Lore).

Your recommended primary branch is the Cascade Bearers.

**UNSPONSORED BACKGROUND**

**UNCOMMON**

You have aspirations of attending the Magaambya academy of magic, but fate seemed to thwart you at every turn. You were unable to obtain a sponsorship and lost a collection of helpful textbooks to unexpected insect damage. You nevertheless made the long trip to Nantambu through terrible weather, uncharacteristically bad roads, and indifferent fellow travelers. Yet you have persevered. Now that you are here, alone but determined, you won’t let anything stand in your way.

Choose two ability boosts. One must be to Constitution or Charisma, and one is a free ability boost.

You’re trained in your choice of the Diplomacy or Intimidation skill. You gain a skill feat: Group Impression if you chose Diplomacy or Intimidating Glare if you chose Intimidation. You’re also trained in Academia Lore.

Your recommended primary branch is the Tempest-Sun Mages.