

[tags: history, crack taken seriously,

The story of Yudhshala begins with Alexander the Great. Or, more accurately, with the Nanda Empire's response to Alexander the Great.

From Macedon, Alexander's armies spread quickly. But faster than his armies spread the tales of his conquests. This allowed the Nanda Empire to prepare for battle, mobilising armies far greater than the Hellenic armies.

However, Alexander was undeterred. And with good reason, given that he had some of the most advanced war-wizards of the time. Not that that's saying much, but it still gave him a massive advantage over the Achaemenid Empire and their steadfast refusal to integrate magic into their war engine. (How they survived while doing that, while truly miraculous, is a story for another time.) So in addition to their training of Muggle armies, the Nanda Empire founded a school - the centre of our story. This school was creatively named Yudhshala [1 Sanskrit for "school of war"] and used to train war wizards.

Importantly, at this point, this was not a school for children. There was little enough time between the threat of Alexander being acknowledged and Alexander arriving with his armies that there was no opportunity to train new wizards. Rather, they relied on the few competent, adult wizards they could find and turned them into war wizards, not caring for their previous role. Alexander was successfully turned back, not by any merit of the Nanda Empire, but by his own Muggle troops. They did not fully understand the strength of their wizarding allies. Thus, they threatened to mutiny if forced to face what they perceived as a far stronger enemy. And, certainly at the time, war wizards played a supplemental role in armies, and attacking with only a small contingent of magicals would be suicide. Alexander recognized this, and turned back for Egypt.

The last act of Yudhshala under the Nanda Dynasty was to assassinate Alexander. They feared, quite rightly, that if he were allowed to consolidate his holdings in Persia and Egypt, that he would return with a greater - or at least less cowardly - force of Muggles, allowing him to cross the Indus and conquer yet another empire. It is widely believed that Alexander's wine pourer was magically compelled to poison him. How this was done, no one knows, as neither the Imperius Curse nor the Confundus Charm had been invented, and all records have been burnt. It is speculated that he was merely bribed with magical powers and then betrayed by whoever promised him. It is also speculated - although only in hushed tones - that a ritual was invented to poison him from afar. Regardless of the method of assassination, it worked, and Alexander died, shattering his empire.

The Nanda Dynasty fell soon afterwards. Other than general unpopularity, high taxes, and so on, one of the reasons for their fall was the mass conscription of magicals for Yudhshala.

Dozens of freshly-trained, unwillingly conscripted battlemages were a recipe for civil unrest - and civil unrest it caused, leading to their overthrow and the rise of the Maurya Empire.

It was at this point that the concept of magical oaths and contracts were invented, in the then city-state of Rome. This is a large factor in the rise and relative stability in the Roman Empire, but in terms of relevance to our story, it allowed the sole domination of Yudhshala by the Mauryan Empire, with all potential war-wizards magically swearing loyalty to the emperor Chandragupta and his heirs.

The school persisted in this way for more than a century, turning out highly-trained battlemages for the Empire until its dismantlement by Emperor Ashoka. Battle magic of the time was primitive at best and cruel at worst, and Ashoka wished to reduce the suffering caused by his battles.

There was no magical outside threat to the Empire - whatever Alexander's source of power was, he lost it upon his death, and the disorganised petty kingdoms of Indochina posed no threat, either magical or mundane. He failed to consider the inside threats to the Empire.

After the school's disbandment, the previously-trained battlemages were held to their oaths to not act against the Empire, but there were no oaths preventing them from teaching others.

The succession of weak kings that followed Ashoka did not rebuild the school. It is debated whether they could do so, or if attempting to do so would see enough oathbreakers that it would lead to the fall of the empire from within. (Magical oaths, at this time, were not powerful enough to actively prevent someone from taking an action, nor to levy any significant punishment - they functioned mostly through public humiliation.)

The fate of the school ultimately did not matter, however, as the last Mauryan Emperor was assassinated by a Muggle.

Yudhshala remained disbanded until the Parthian Empire re-founded it in 60 BCE to stand a chance against the Roman invasions. They reformed Yudhshala rather than creating their own magical school to curry favour with their Indian subjects and neighbours. However, there was one major difference: the school was to be founded independent of any government. This was for two reasons: to prevent one emperor from causing the lack of war-wizards that the Mauryan Empire suffered from, and, again, to curry favour with their Indian neighbours, who were allowed to attend. [2 There was still one political division remaining in the school: Romans were not allowed in. Not that any Roman wizard would need Yudhshala, given Rome's power, and thus this rule remained mostly irrelevant until the fifteenth century.] And, to keep this independence, one of the requirements for the new role of headmaster was to swear oaths to prevent any governmental interference with the running of the school.

The Roman-Parthian wars that followed were long and bloody, but rarely caused any change in power or territory, except in terms of the ruler of Armenia. A result of this conflict was that both the Romans and the Parthians began recruiting and training war-wizards earlier and earlier, eventually reducing the age to begin training to five, where it remains today. Some still argue that training before the age of eleven is near-useless, as magical cores are not developed enough to do any practical work. The vast majority of those that would argue this are British, with their experiences at Hogwarts. However, in most of the world, it is generally agreed that magical growth begins as soon as it's exercised consistently. The largest amount of growth occurs between eleven and fourteen, but that's nowhere near all of it, when training from five to twenty-one.

When Parthia eventually did fall - to the Sassanid Empire, not the Romans - the Sassanids attempted to take over the school, unable to tolerate a source of power inside their borders that was not under their control.

They failed.

In large part, this was due to the oaths of the Headmaster to prevent government intervention. There were attempts to remove the sitting Headmaster and replace him with a lackey of the Sassanids, but these were all unsuccessful. Many of the current students objected, as did the charter of Yudhshala itself. While the charter was not backed with magic - there simply wasn't

enough magic to have both hundreds of mages casting spells and such long-lasting magical bounds - it was backed with public approval. Most students did not wish to either be conscripted to serve the Sassanids nor to lose their prestigious place at Yudhshala. But ultimately, it was not the student's objections that saved Yudhshala, it was the pressures of the multiple smaller Indian states.

Yudhshala's training of war-wizards in a place accessible by all had dramatically changed the face of Indian politics. War-wizards were no longer an oddity and a guarantee of victory. Rather, they were a near-certainty in any large-scale conflict. Few of the collection of petty kingdoms had anywhere near the resources required to run their own magical school. And thus, among nearly all the Indian states anywhere near the Sassanids, there was widespread outcry. Not being able to afford a two-front war against an Indian coalition and the Romans, they gave in. Their dreams of domination of Yudhshala did not end there, however - they just decided to be more subtle about it. To begin with, they introduced more and more bureaucrats to the school, to slow down its efficiency and to later use as bargaining chips to make their demands. (At this point, the Romans were also bogged down in so much of their own bureaucracy that they suffered very little competitive advantage from this.)

Over the course of about three hundred years, they built up nearly enough bureaucrats within the school to entirely dominate it. This lasted until a headmaster was chosen from outside the Sassanid Empire - the number of students from the Gupta Empire had been steadily increasing, and their influence over the school had been growing as well. Due to the unusual process by which headmasters were chosen - the number of students from one country was the main factor determining where they came from - a Guptan headmaster was chosen.

The Sassanid headmasters, of course, were still magically bound to avoid governmental interference in the school. However, their mental control as to what counted as interference was quite impressive, and throughout this entire time, they managed to convince themselves that the buildup of bureaucrats was not interference. By some, it is believed that Occlumency was invented for this purpose. However, this overlooks the fact that Occlumency on the Indian subcontinent has been a practice for multiple millennia before Yudhshala was founded. [2 It is, in fact, referenced in many of the pre-Statute Vedic texts. What this represents is only the spread of Occlumency in Persia.]

The Guptan headmaster then proposed a new school charter. Among other parts, the most important change that was part of it was the limit of how many non-students were allowed to run the school. There were to be, at most, one teacher per thirty students, one headmaster, and three assistants. All other possible positions were to be filled either by students elected by students, by a teacher performing a second job, or by a house elf commanded by the Headmaster. The purpose of this change was to counter the buildup of bureaucrats in the school. And with a 95% approval rating from non-Sassanid students and nearly as high with students from within the Sassanid Empire itself, it was easily passed.

This, however, did leave one important loophole - teachers. There was no practical method of removing the role of teachers from the school. What could be done, however, was to limit the number of teachers and to swear them to the same oaths as the Headmaster.

It is here that we take a moment to discuss location. Under the Nanda Empire, and later the Maurya Empire, Yudhshala did not have a fixed location. It was a travelling army boot camp, in

modern terms. Every year, they moved to a new location to recruit and/or draft more magicals from a different location, bringing along all partially-trained magicals with them.

Under the Parthian refounding of the school, it was built in a fixed location. Khuzdar was chosen as this location, as it was defensible, and more importantly, far away from the Roman border. An auxiliary benefit of this location was that it was less of a distance for any Indians to travel to the school - but this was not considered and only realised after the fact. (All Parthian students were provided transport via broomstick to Yudhshala, a two-week journey.)

The trouble with Khuzdar, however, was the lack of ley lines. Any location with such a concentration of wizards needed a similar concentration of ley lines to avoid drying up the natural magic of the region. And there were no ley lines whatsoever in Khuzdar.

Thus, under the Guptan headmaster, Yudhshala was moved much further east to the city of Pataliputra. This was done under the guise of finding a location with sufficient ley lines - and make no mistake, there was a great confluence of seven ley lines at Pataliputra, including the massively powerful flow along the Ganges [4 link to [a more in-depth analysis on ley lines](#) that's too big for a footnote] - but the true reason behind this was to kill Sassanid influence over the school once and for all. The Sassanid emperors were not pleased, but they couldn't do anything about it.

This move is perhaps one of the most important moments in Yudhshala's history, as it attracted the attention of the Chinese.

First, however, comes the rise of the Rashidun and Umayyad Caliphates. The rapid rise of Islam sent shockwaves throughout nearly all of Eurasia. This was, in large part, due to Muhammed himself being a genuine prodigy and somehow, nearly immortal. [5 The method of his longevity is hotly debated, especially among magical religious leaders. Most Muslims claim that it was a gift from God, while a few, especially Ibadī Muslims, claim that his alchemical skill allowed him to create a Philosopher's Stone. Meanwhile, Christians, especially Catholic and Orthodox Christians, claim that he created a Horcrux through the killings in the conquest of Mecca. While consistent with his year-long disappearance after said conquest of Mecca, the Horcrux does not protect against old age, nor is it believed to have been known in Arabia at the time. Hindus are wildly divided on the issue. Some believe that Mohammed was blessed by Shiva to improve the religions in the Arabian peninsula. If this is true, it backfired wildly, given the centuries of conflict between Muslim and Hindu states. However, most simply believe that his magical skill allowed him to create new rituals to preserve his life force.]

Regardless of the origin of his longevity, Mohammed used it well. Under his rulership, first the Rashidun Caliphate and then the Umayyad Caliphate conquered Iberia to Persia, due in large part to Mohammed's skill in battle.

Important to our story are the wars in Persia. The Sassanids had exhausted themselves fighting the remnants of the Roman Empire and had lost control over Yudhshala, and, as such, were ripe for takeover. However, the collection of Indian kingdoms were still powerful enough to pose significant resistance to the conquests of the Umayyads, due in large part to relatively large armies of war-wizards rather than the Umayyads' few highly trained wizards and Mohammed himself.

At the time, there was significant discord within the school on whether to allow Umayyad subjects specifically and Muslims in general into Yudhshala. There was precedent for this - during the Parthian refounding of the school, they had banned Romans for very similar political

reasons. In 650, it was eventually resolved by popular demand that all Muslims would be allowed into the school, so long as Mohammed, in his role as Caliph, magically swore to protect the independence of India. At the time, it was assumed that Mohammed was truly immortal, and thus, his oaths would bind the Caliphate forever. Reportedly saying "I don't have time to train everyone myself," Mohammed agreed.

Mohammed did eventually die in 860 at the age of 289, leading to the drawn-out collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate. One result of this was that the remnants of the Abbasid Caliphate could now attack the Gurjara-Pratihara empire. They did so, and these wars were one of the major factors in the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate itself. [6 One of the others was the fact that Mohammed, also apparently believing himself to be immortal, never designated a successor. Which, other than the collapse of the Caliphate, has led to more than a millennia of discussion, debates, and wars between schools of Islam as to who the true successor to Mohammed is.] However, these wars, at least for the next few centuries, are not relevant to this story. What is relevant is across the other border of India - China.

For centuries now, stories of Yudhshala had travelled along the Silk Road. This was nothing new - stories had been traded up and down the Silk Road nearly as long as the silk for which it was named. However, these stories were somewhat unusual in that they attracted the attention of the Chinese. The Chinese empires were notorious for not caring about anything outside of China. And, for more than two centuries, they were insistent on taking that attitude towards Yudhshala. The Tang dynasty, however, took the view that they were to be conquered rather than ignored. In 740, after brief, victorious skirmishes with the Umayyads in the 710s through what is now Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, they came into conflict with Yudhshala itself.

They lost, and badly. In part, this was due to a revolt of their own troops. But more than treachery, it was the quality of their wizards. For nearly all of recorded Chinese history, the focus of government-employed wizards had been internal matters. They were, for instance, instrumental in raising the Great Wall, for all the good it did, and the Beijing Grand Canal, a far more useful project. However, their focus in most times was far more pedestrian, focusing mostly on agriculture and medicine. In contrast, despite minor changes to the curriculum over the past three centuries, mostly around the same time as the move to Pataliputra, Yudhshala graduates were still extremely skilled war-wizards. And, of course, Mohammed was a near-unstoppable force.

To everyone's surprise, the Chinese admitted their loss. They could hardly cover it up, of course, but it was standard for them to simply not mention it. Instead, they sent an embassy to the Pala Empire, who they assumed were in charge of the school, asking for the same agreement as was given to Mohammed.

They were denied. Not for any political reasons, but because the Palas were not, in fact, in charge of the school. They were redirected to speak to the Headmaster, who at the time was one of Mohammed's disfavoured sons.

This headmaster was not at all inclined to agree, given that the Caliphate was currently winning against the Chinese. He believed that Yudhshala in general, and the Caliphate in particular, should push back and defeat the Chinese once and for all. [7 What their plans were to either turn the Turks or to transport Muggle soldiers across the steppes is unknown. Many believe that their plan was to use a wizard-only invasion force, under the belief that the Chinese wizards

were too weak to properly utilise Muggle armies at home - but this is inaccurate, and records exist of battle plans involving Muggle armies outside of Beijing.]

He was, eventually, overruled by the students themselves, specifically the non-Caliphate students. It was widely perceived as unfair for the Caliphate to remove an opportunity from the Chinese that they themselves benefited from.

Despite this, however, the headmaster remained unmoving, denying the Chinese the chance. A group of students [8 Some claim these students were acting at the behest of the Chinese. This is rank conspiracy nonsense; the Chinese would never stoop that low.] eventually threatened to have him removed if he didn't acquiesce.

He did not. Instead, he put it to a vote by the students. "I will not be bent by a small minority," he said. It's widely agreed that he knew he was outnumbered and that this was solely a face-saving attempt.

The Chinese were accepted in a landslide, with the vote totaling 942-175 (presumably with 62 absentions, as the total enrolled was 1179 students, but it was a secret ballot, and most of those records have been lost to time). But almost as important as the introduction of the Chinese to the school was the introduction of democracy. Despite this vote being symbolic, it was a major turning point in the power structure of Yudhshala.

Externally, however, it began with an influx of Chinese students to Yudhshala. As with the outlying regions of the Caliphate, there was a limit on the number of older students allowed in, as too many beginners would be dangerous. However, it was still a massive increase in students, approximately another five hundred. With this introduction as well as the students from the more far-flung areas of the Caliphate, Yudhshala was in need of an expansion.

Expanding the physical school was easy. With the Chinese skill at creating wizardspace [9 places that are larger on the inside than the outside] there was no need for any more land. Much more difficult was the expansion of the leaders.

The primary obstacle was the reforms imposed on the school during the eastward move. There was to be, at most, one headmaster with three assistants. Which, nearly everyone agreed, was too little for so many students.

There were three possibilities for more organisation. There were house-elves under the command of the Headmaster, which no one would take seriously in any position of power. There were teachers doing a second job, which was already done as much as was reasonable. And there were student-elected students.

This role was introduced as an afterthought, primarily for extracurricular activities under fear that leading such activities would register as an administrative role. And yet, those roles would become some of, if not the most important in Yudhshala.

To begin with, the school was mostly organised within three groups. This had been tradition since the move to Pataliputra, as it allowed the headmaster's three assistants to serve as a lead for each of those three groups. The composition of those three groups was traditionally interchangeable, but upon introduction of the Chinese, those three groups became "Caliphate subjects," "Chinese subjects," and "everyone else" - or, more accurately, Indians (and later, the rest of southeast Asia). These groups were kept in place, but subdivided. The Caliphate and China were divided by pre-existing administrative regions; the Caliphate's provinces and the Chinese circuits. India, with their far more fluid borders caused by multiple bickering states, was divided by empire. (Border conflicts, i.e. both empires claiming the area from which a given

mage originated, were resolved mostly through that mage's choice and the occasional assassination.) And each subgroup was to elect their representative to report to their "headmaster's assistant," although that title had increasingly become a misnomer. Of course, these subdivisions were wildly mispopulated. Theoretically, at least, each subdivision was to be given equal influence. In practice, however, the larger subdivisions were given more consideration.

This system was upended in a rather slow process from 860 to 910. Mohammed died in 860, and almost immediately after, the Caliphate started its drawn-out collapse. This was due partly to a succession crisis as, assuming he was immortal, Mohammed never designated an heir. This succession crisis is what gave rise to the Shia vs Sunni religious conflicts, as their divisions are due largely to who was Mohammed's rightful religious heir. But other than the succession crisis, various nations subjugated by the Caliphate took this as their chance to throw off their rule. There had been a few attempts prior to this, but the only successful one was the Iberian and Berber revolt in the 740's, and that was with heavy support from what came to be called the Holy Roman Empire. [10 Charlemagne's story is quite fascinating, not least due to the fact that he was the only major conqueror before the Statute of Secrecy to not have any magical powers. But that is outside the scope of this project.] But Mohammed's death led to wide-scale revolts that couldn't all be put down at once.

Then, in the early 10th century, the Tang dynasty shattered. It took nearly a hundred years for China to be reunited under the Song dynasty, and during that time, the circuits were not a viable means of dividing students.

Clearly, something had to be done about Yudhshala's subdivisions. Because of the slow decline of the Caliphate, there had been attempts to keep dividing students by the old provinces. Of course, this caused many internal conflicts by putting students of states that were either at war or recently at war in the same place, reporting to the same people. Eventually, it was decided that it would be divided similarly to India, by the current ruler rather than mostly-archaic provincial borders. China was given much the same treatment during much of the 10th century, to be redivided by province when the Song reunited China. (This treatment was continued the next time China collapsed, and every time after that.)

The other effect of Mohammed's death was that Islamic states - which, prior to the collapse, consisted entirely of the Caliphate - were now allowed to conquer India. (Or at least, they were allowed to try.) Mohammed's oaths to allow Caliphate subjects into Yudhshala only restricted him. Everyone assumed he was immortal. An understandable mistake, and yet it still kicked off, or, at the very minimum, failed to prevent more than a millennium of religious conflicts that are still ongoing today.

However, this was, in large part, irrelevant to the story of Yudhshala. Since its Parthian refounding, Yudhshala had hosted two sides (and occasionally more) in conflict.

It was at this point that one teacher was hired - one the British knew as Helga Hufflepuff. She had travelled from northern Germany in what was then the Holy Roman Empire [11 The only reason she was allowed within a hundred miles of the school, being a Roman, was that she was exiled. The Parthians wanted the ability to recruit Roman deserters - not that they had a hope in hell of that, given the extent of the Roman's oaths, but they tried anyways.] and spent a significant amount of time in Persia before being hired as an alchemy teacher in Yudhshala. She eventually left because of disagreements on how Yudhshala should be run with both the

headmaster and many of the students. One student allegedly told her “go make your own school, if you don’t care for ours.” It is unclear whether this exchange took place, but it is very clear that she did, in fact, found her own school, or at least played a major role in doing so. [12 Salazar Slytherin, meanwhile, was a near-graduate student at the time under the Cordoban division. One of the few students who dared publicly agree with Helga, after graduation, he left to join her in Britain. This is why Spain was served by Hogwarts for so long, rather than continuing under Yudhshala as North Africa did.]

The next few centuries in Yudhshala were relatively quiet, at least until the rise of the Mongol Empire. As the name implies, they originated from Mongolia, from where they quickly conquered China, Persia, and Eastern Europe, as well as everything in between. Its successes in Europe were largely due to an alliance with the Byzantine Empire, which led to the banning of all Mongol students from Yudhshala (as the Parthian rules against Romans and their allies still stood). More unclear is why Persia and China were conquered while India was left alone.

There are multiple theories among historians, very few of which have any credibility. Some claim it was a bargain struck with the Black Khan himself, to take Persia and China while leaving India alone. (Plausible had the headmaster not been Chinese himself at the time of Genghis’s rise.) Some claim Genghis was, in fact, Mohammed reborn. Other than the blatant anti-Islam sentiment that has obviously given rise to such theories, this fails to explain the failed attempts to conquer India. If it truly was Mohammed’s oaths protecting India, they should have stopped him before launching an invasion in the first place.

Eventually, however, the empire fell. Ruled entirely by Genghis himself for the better part of two centuries, it was the largest empire the world had ever known (by contiguous land area). It fell due to multiple factors - notably, Durmstrang’s efforts in Eastern Europe (though they failed to kill Genghis, they did drive him out) and the rise of the Ming Dynasty in China, replacing the Yuan. It is unclear whether Yudhshala had any role in the rise of the Ming, but it is known that Zhu Yuanzhang - the rebel leader - was a Yudhshalan student.

But before this, the Year of Two Massacres (as it’s known, somewhat overdramatically, in popular culture) took place within Yudhshala itself.

By 1330, the Delhi Sultanate had conquered much of India. This had been hard-won, with frequent rebellions and the unification of the South Indian Hindu states under the Vijayanagara Empire. In 1325, a minor son of what would become that empire whose name has been lost to time (and deliberate obfuscation), was discovered as magical. As was standard for that time, he was sent to Yudhshala nearly immediately. What was not standard for the time were his instructions, nor a special invention he was sent with.

At the time, South Indian students were still divided by the borders that had existed before the Delhian campaigns. Thus, this son was in a group of around three dozen students, all from his relative area.

He spent over a decade talking to said dormmates - convincing them of nationalist loyalty, the importance of self-sacrifice, and such. In private, he gave all sorts of promises - notably, he swore to convert to at least three different religions.

Then, in 1337, he struck. In the dead of night, he and sixteen other trusted associates chained themselves together, went through the Indian complex, slaughtering as many future Delhian soldiers as they could.



It was entirely possible that they could have gotten away with it cleanly, with no evidence other than the mounds of dead bodies. But one was sloppy, and woke a student up before killing her. She screamed (as one is wont to do when waking up to find half your roommates dead), waking most of the Indian complex. (It is generally believed that said scream was amplified with accidental magic - which, given the student in question was seven, is entirely possible but unproven.)

In response, the leader shot off a curse that cleanly took her head off, then prepared them for a fight.

And a fight he got. A trio of Sri Lankan students (who were not privy to the plan) ran first for the headmaster (who was, at the time, Delhian), then the Chinese students, notably the Beijing Six, six upper-level students who were infamous for their purported (at the time) dark experiments and one of whom had a very public rivalry with many of the plotters.

The seventeen made an excellent last stand in said dorm, killing Delhian students and incapacitating most others (although what appeared to be a Killing Curse was shot at one of the Beijing Six). The defenders responded in kind, with both the headmaster and an infamous alchemy teacher aiming to kill.

When the first insurrectionist fell - which took surprisingly long - the leader spoke a word, and they all vanished. The chains with which they had bound themselves had been a Portkey.

The Portkey was set to transport the son (and whoever else you might wish to save, as his father put it) to the Maldives, which was not involved with the current Vijayanagar-Delhi rivalry. There, they would be able to lay low for a decade or so until the army was depleted enough that they would be able to launch a successful attack.

Vijayanagar never did manage to do so. The Bahmanis Sultanate beat them to it, launching a successful revolt against the Delhi Sultanate in 1347. But this is beside the point.

That was not the only mass murder in 1337 in Yudhshala, however. The Beijing Six decided to take advantage of the chaos, and captured most of the few remaining Delhian students... and the headmaster.

Or so it is said. There is very little known about the Reign of Terror within Yudhshala at the time, due mostly to the lack of public changes. But what we do know is damning enough.

The headmaster was reinstated in his position less than a day later under some mind-control spell, likely the Imperius [13 which had been invented only a few decades ago by the Black Khan himself, to maintain total control over his empire]. This is known because he was arrested during that summer, and his routine Legilimency scans showed unmistakable signs of interference. The remaining Delhian students were used as fuel for many dark rituals - "mostly just for the hell of it," as one escaped student put it. (There were two escape attempts. One was successful. The other committed suicide rather than be recaptured.)

The Beijing Six didn't use their power within the school to the extent they could have. It is generally agreed that, if they chose to, they could have completely dominated the school for years to come, with the Headmaster under their control. But they didn't - they were, in large part, content to allow Yudhshala to run as it normally did while continuing their dark experiments mostly in secret. Their motivation is still disputed to this day, but most argue that they were simply nihilists who wished to see the world burn.

Over the summer, they were captured. Over the two-week August break (a holdover from the boot camp days, it was still referred to as leave), all students were sent home - as refusing to let

them would bring down the wrath of nearly every government which had any students at Yudhshala, out of fear that Yudhshala was raising an army of its own. (Ridiculous, of course - if Yudhshala needed an army, they could call on nearly every former student they had, there was no need for them to keep half-trained wizards.) A raid was led on Yudhshala, headed by the Yuan - one of the few times any part of the Mongol Empire cooperated with Yudhshala - with participants from most of India. Despite Yudhshala's innate defences that had been in place since the move to Pataliputra allowed for spare magic use in the ensuing battle that followed, one of the Beijing Six were killed. By sheer luck, he was the one chosen to be the "leader" and have the wards tied to him. Once he was defeated, the defences deactivated, the school was reopened, and the remaining despots fled.

The next headmaster was the Indian "headmaster's assistant," elevated by the archaic process by which headmasters were chosen. Who, at the time, was a Vijayanaragan who had previously served under the emperor as one of his top generals. It was widely assumed that the emperor had waited until he was in position in order to take control of the school afterwards. However, to everyone's surprise, the results of his tenure showed differently. (Or at least, they showed that if that was the plan, it failed.)

The first action the new headmaster took was to expel both the Beijing Five and all participants in the Vijayanagar-led massacre (for which no name has ever been widely accepted). This alone could be dismissed as a public relations stunt - if any of those were to return, they would likely be killed themselves by vengeful students (or quietly poisoned by the alchemy teacher). The radical restructuring of the school, however, could not. The announcement was made to denationalise the school's subdivisions, rearranging all students based on subject focuses. Up until this point, there were very few opportunities for specialisation, a relic of its time as a military academy. There were specialty classes for alchemy (which was deemed too dangerous to force everyone in) and for various environmental magics, which required enough raw power that only the elite could participate. The reorganisation kept these, but added a half-dozen more, allowing students to specialise in nearly any subject - general combat magic [14 by far the most popular], "fine" magic, or Charms requiring a high level of precision, predictions of the future [15 as unreliable as most methods of Divination are, they can still be forced on occasion, and True Prophecies need a True Seer to channel through], natural magic involving magical plants and creatures, arcane containment [16 notably of Wild Magic. These students were the ones who bound the Wild Magic that was running rampant throughout Indochina - seals that lasted until Muggle conflicts in Vietnam], and finally, magical fundamentals, or theories of how exactly magic works in the world.

These eight divisions were then used to replace the traditional national subdivisions. Of course, there were still only three "headmaster's assistants," so there were some combinations needed. Combat magic had its own, fine magic, magical theory, and Divination were combined, and the rest - environmental, arcane containment, alchemy, and natural magics were also combined. These combinations had very little to do with the actual subject matter and were based nearly entirely on populations.

However, this left one problem - those too young to specialise. Up until around age thirteen, students lacked both the knowledge to make their choices and the power to back them up. This was solved by randomly assigning each new batch of students to a specialisation and then reassigning them, again randomly, to another specialisation twice a year. The plan was for them

to be exposed to various kinds of magic - and it was a plan that worked. There were eight years before they chose their permanent placement [17 while transfers were allowed, it was discouraged and happened rarely], and they lived with the upper years of that subject for two half-year segments.

This also had the effect of exposing all children to other people from across Yudhshala's catchment, and the effect of concentrating specialisations to lead to greater cooperation. [18 The most important of these was the improvement of portal technology, which led to the foundation of Shamballa. While Shamballa loves to claim that it was founded more than three millennia ago, it also claims to have been founded by mages from the Persian Empire. The earliest possible state that could claim that title was Medes, twenty-five hundred years ago. Shamballa was probably founded in the late 14th century, and the Persian empire in question was Timur's empire. Portals were also implemented in various cities throughout Asia in order to deliver students to Yudhshala, solving the problem of two to three-week travel times for the more outlying students to attend Yudhshala.] While it didn't entirely remove the nationalism that had grown up around the school, it did greatly reduce it, and more importantly, it meant that there couldn't be one attack that led to the complete destruction of a country's future army without destroying the entire school. While there could still be assassinations of overly-powerful wizards (and there were, at the rate of about once per decade), there weren't enough to justify any further changes.

The next major change came with the rise of the Ottoman Empire. In 1453, Mehmed II took Constantinople and proclaimed himself the successor of Rome. The same day, all students from within the Ottoman Empire's borders were immediately magically expelled. This was due to the Parthian mandate that no Roman could ever attend Yudhshala, and, apparently, claimants to Rome counted as well. [19 It is generally agreed that the Holy Roman Empire would also have counted. However, the only German to visit Yudhshala in that time was Helga, and she was exiled and thus was allowed.] This caused quite a stir within the Ottoman Empire, and after lengthy internal discussions, they kept their claim to Rome and founded their own school. (The Janissaries and the Devshirme that came from this, while a fascinating story, are, once more, outside the scope of this project.) This led to the alienation of both Anatolia, and, eventually, Northern Africa. (Egypt was nearly a complete wasteland magically for reasons that are still unknown, and while Morocco was never conquered, given the nature of their relations, the Moroccan government deemed it safer to attend the Ottoman school rather than Yudhshala.) Neither the rise of the Mughal Empire nor the replacement of the Ming with the Qing had much impact on the operation of Yudhshala. It was designed to withstand the rise and fall of empires, and, in this case, it did so. The only remotely interesting thing in Yudhshala over the two hundred years from 1453 to the Statute was the Anglo-Mughal war, in which Yudhshala- and Hogwarts-trained mages went head-to-head for the first and only time. While the Muggle soldiers on each side were vastly imbalanced (the Mughals had upwards of half a million troops to the three thousand or so British), the numbers of mages were relatively equal, as all of the British soldiers were magical. The Mughals still won decisively, leading most to believe that Yudhshalan training was superior to Hogwarts' training. (Once more, I repeat that magical cores grow as long as they are used, not strictly from ages 11 to 17, as the British would have you believe.)

The British still maintain that they lost due to the use of dark magic. Weather magic is not Dark, and, at the time, it was not forbidden. This war was, in fact, largely what put the British on the side of banning weather magic - a grudge they kept for more than a century until most weather magic was banned by the ICW in 1820.

The next change was the Statute of Secrecy. No more could wizards legally serve governments directly in their armies - though that never seemed to stop them (see the Grindelwald War for the most egregious example of this). Though many expected this to cause a reduction in demand for war-wizards, it actually increased them, as magical borders became unmoored from Muggle borders. The fracture of the Mughal Empire was not mirrored in the magical world, and, in fact, they succeeded in conquering all significant magical sites in both India and Indochina. While the muggle Mughal Empire fractured in the 1740s, the magical empire remained in power for another century. It was not until their disastrous attempt at attacking China that their fracture was followed in the magical world.

The British Raj, meanwhile, without the involvement of magical warfare, succeeded in conquering the subcontinent, taking advantage of divisions within the Mughal Empire. This led to very little change within Yudhshala, as the Muggle government had no say in what Indian magicals could do. The British Ministry of Magic on several occasions attempted to use the Muggle control of the subcontinent to gain control of either Yudhshala, the students within, or the raw magic used to power it, but were rebuffed on all occasions - once by the Muggle government, but mostly by Yudhshala being able to defend itself.

The true impact of the British Raj on Yudhshala was the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent population boom it caused. Prior to this, Yudhshala was exceptionally large for a school of magic - most schools ran under an apprenticeship system prior to these events, as there simply weren't enough magical children to justify anything else [20 Hogwarts was the one exception to this, as for centuries, it served all of Catholic Europe. Then the Reformation happened, Hogwarts turned Protestant, and Beauxbatons was founded to serve Catholics. The Kalmar Union fractured and Sweden attempted and failed to start their own school of magic - a significant part in their downfall - and after that, most of Scandinavia turned to Durmstrang, joining the "Balkan" Alliance. This left only parts of Germany and Britain as significant Protestant states attending Hogwarts, and soon the British realised it was a bad idea to be arming potential future enemies. (Of course the colonies weren't important enough to school at Hogwarts. They had their own schools, the only two of which that have survived are Ilvermorny and Castelobruxo.) As a result of the reduction in students in Hogwarts, it transitioned to an apprenticeship system, then changed back with the advent of the Industrial Revolution.] - but was still manageable. Fifteen hundred students, while large, is relatively commonplace in the Muggle world. Seventy-five hundred is not, and seventy-five thousand is nowhere near reasonable.

However, it would take two hundred years to reach that level of population, and, as such, Yudhshala was able to adjust. While most magical schools transitioned to a classroom-based system, inspired either by Muggle universities or by Yudhshala itself (as Yudhshala and no one else claims), Yudhshala itself expanded those systems.

Now more than ever, the rule mandating no more than three "headmaster's assistants" was causing problems. Before 1700, their role was generally similar to that of a manager - most of the work was done by the elected students (one per specialisation, but they could appoint other

students as their subordinates at will), and only when these leaders had problems did they come to the “assistant.”

This system was barely sustainable with the current size of Yudhshala, especially in the combat-centric part of the school. With six hundred people, half of them unruly teenagers under one elected leader with little to no experience in any leadership role, there was little they could do to keep the rest of the students under control. Their youth - most leaders were between eighteen and twenty-one [21 There were multiple instances of fourteen-year-olds being elected, mostly as puppets for older students.] - did not help matters either, as most ordinary teenage students saw them as equals or lessers. (Never mind the fact that they were chosen by said students.) Relying too much on the “assistant” was seen as a sign of weakness, not to mention how busy said “assistant” was, so that wasn’t a plausible solution.

Even with all this chaos, however, it took a near-doubling of the population before any changes were seriously considered, and most of a year for the arguments to settle.

What they eventually settled on was to keep most of the current systems in place and simply add more administrators - perhaps the one time in history that more administration was a good solution. The sole leader and their toadies were replaced by a fully-elected council for each specialisation, with members proportionate to the number of students. The younger students elected their own representatives - called a Council of Youth, despite the entire school being run by Councils of Youth - who had little authority in the actual running of the school and served mostly as an advisory council. And, because the current headmaster cared little for the running of the school (after taking liberties with a student, he was killed by said student and a group of friends), there would also be a deputy headmaster elected, where everyone in the school had a chance to vote.

The trouble with this was the massive increase in the number of students kept driving the size of the councils higher and higher. Originally, there was to be one councillor per fifty students, with a minimum of five (to prevent Triumvirate shenanigans - they may have hated the Romans, but they did learn from their mistakes). This would lead to a council of twenty-four for the largest subdivision, that of combat magic - which was generally assumed to be fine, and even another twofold increase in students wouldn’t change that. But the population kept going up. It doubled once, as predicted, then again, then again. At this point, even some of the smaller councils were getting bogged down with their own weight. So another change was needed.

Thankfully, this change was simple - instead of linear scaling, they used the now-commonly known, if not commonly used, cube root system [22 having councillors equal to twice the cube root of the number of voters]. This somewhat reduced the difference in size between councils and massively reduced the growth rate and size of said council. And, in an ironic result of numbers, today, the largest council - still the Combat Magic specialisation - has forty-eight councillors, the “reasonable upper limit” that the first system was designed around.

The deputy headmaster, however, was the most important part of this reorganisation. For centuries, the headmaster had been the de facto leader of the largest collection of magicals in the world (with brief interruptions from the Mongol and Mughal empires). This power had been tempered by the fact that most of these were relatively untrained, and, in any case, the headmaster had limited control over them.

The deputy headmaster, on the other hand, was chosen specifically because they could exert power over the students. They were also chosen by said students, but that was often not

relevant. However, it was enough to cause serious concerns about the power of the school. The Mughals and the Chinese were the first to raise concerns, as they thought direct intervention from Yudhshala could tip the scales in either direction. [23 They were wrong - the Chinese utterly crushed the Mughals. The only thing that could have changed that was a better strategist than the Mughals', but they would never allow a foreigner in charge of their soldiers. However, it was still a reasonable belief.] The leader of Magical China made a statement that "it was intolerable that the second-most powerful leader in the magical world would be a child elected by children." [24 Whether he meant the first most powerful ruler to be himself, the Mughal emperor, or the headmaster proper is unknown. At the time, India assumed it to be the Mughal emperor, China assumed it to be the Chinese emperor, most other people paying attention assumed it to be the headmaster proper, and savvy political commentators knew that it was quite a clever bit of speechcrafting, letting everyone make their own assumptions.] But nothing could be done. Yudhshala had made its decisions internally, and other leaders were barred from influencing those decisions. Attempting to do so anyways would have led to expulsion of all their subjects from Yudhshala - an action that certainly would have tipped the scales in any future conflicts. And so they could do nothing but make ineffective speeches, no matter how well they were written.

This is where Yudhshala stands today. Seventy-five thousand students make it a larger city than any magical city in the world, and, in fact, it has more mages than any country on Earth other than China and India. The campus appears to be less than a hundred square metres, but once entered, covers ten square kilometres. It is almost entirely run by the students that attend it. And those students turn out to be the best battle mages on Earth.