

Most of the protagonists and many events of this narrative are authentic, whereas the narrator and a good part of the plot are fictitious. In this regard, similarities with living or dead persons would be accidental and unintentional. The author would like to point out that this book belongs to the genre of entertaining literature that depicts historical truth in connection with fictional elements.

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*"Sultan Khan was a champion of the Indian form of chess, and learned the rules of our chess only late. The fact that even under these circumstances he succeeded in becoming a master, shows a genius that is just extraordinary"*

(José Raúl Capablanca, World Chess Champion, 1888 - 1942)

## ***Foreword by Grandmaster Parimarjan Negi***

Today it's pretty normal for Asian chess players to influence tournaments around the world. About 100 years ago this was quite different.

In 1928 the Indian Malik Mir Sultan Khan entered the world stage and gained remarkable tournament successes in Europe. The reticent young man, who occasionally played wearing an exotic turban, was, in fact, a servant. Khan belonged to the entourage of the Indian diplomat Nawab Malik Sir Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana (1875 - 1944).



Sultan Khan was born in 1905 in today's Pakistani province of Punjab, which was part of British India at that time. At first, he only knew the rules of Indian chess and didn't speak English fluently. Under these circumstances, his later achievements were just unbelievable. Temporarily Khan was one of the ten best chess players in the world.

But as suddenly as he appeared, he also disappeared, since in 1933 he had to follow his master back to India where he died in 1966, without appearing internationally ever again.

In his biographical narrative my chess friend Ulrich Geilmann describes the meteoric rise of Sultan Khan from the perspective of his protagonist Samuel Ian Bradshaw, who meets Khan on a sea voyage from Brindisi to Bombay. Following the dialogues and narratives, the reader will be able to obtain insight into the fascinating life of the outstanding chess master.

Here and there, you will find crucial game fragments which give you the opportunity, to also test your own chess skills if you like. Additionally, the author has analyzed a nearly complete collection of Khan's games, which give a survey of his chess activity.

I wish everyone good entertainment!

Stanford, March 2018

Yours

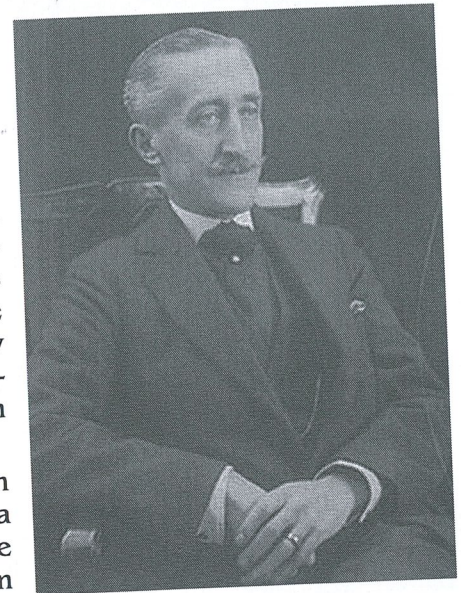
*Parimarjan Negi*

## The Travel Companions

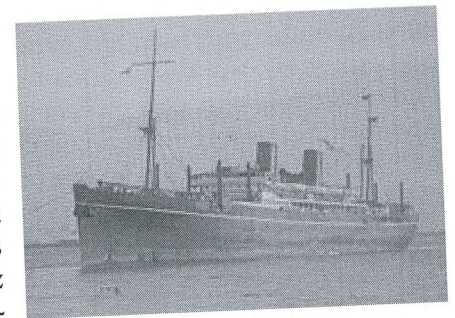
1933 was a very special year for me. I just had finished my law-studies and was now on my way to take up a position in the Legal Department of the Governor-General and Viceroy of British India, Sir Freeman Freeman-Thomas, the Earl of Willingdon. My father was of the opinion that it wouldn't hurt if I got in touch with what he called "normal people". So he prescribed me to travel by train and ship.

But I'm being impolite, since I haven't introduced myself yet. How could I forget my good manners and my first-class education? Please excuse my negligence. My name is Samuel Ian Bradshaw. I'm the youngest son of Colonel Henry James Bradshaw, who recently retired from the 1<sup>st</sup> King's Dragoon Guards. Glad to meet you!

The travel route took me at first from London to Calais where I boarded a train to Paris. After spending one night in a hotel, I headed via Milan and Bologna to Brindisi. Here, the 'HMS Corfu', a modern passenger ship owned by the 'Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company', was waiting for me. The vessel could carry about 400 passengers, and I had booked an outside cabin in the first class. Somehow I felt like Phileas Fogg, hurrying around the world in 80 days in Jules Verne's famous novel. This comparison wasn't too far-fetched, since the 'Corfu' was going to navigate through the Suez Canal and then from Aden to Bombay, thus tracing a part of the literary itinerary.



*Sir Freeman-Thomas*



*HMS Corfu*



Nawab Malik Sir Umar Hayat  
Khan Tiwana

The neighbour in the cabin next to mine, Sir Umar Hayat Khan, was an Indian gentleman who travelled with great pomp. He seemed to be some kind of a big-style landowner who had just finished his diplomatic service in London and was now returning to India with his family and a handful of servants.

Considering my mission, I thought this to be a valuable coincidence, and so I tried to get in touch with the Indian, who even on board behaved like a maharaja. Such acquaintanceship could certainly turn out to be useful for my future plans. However, it's well known that such relations are only helpful if you make use of them. On the other hand, I

had learned some Indian dialects a few weeks ago, including Urdu and Punjabi, and was now ready, willing and able to apply my new knowledge in practice.

So I paid the steward a few sovereigns to be placed at the Indian's dinnertable. The money was well invested, as Sir Umar was a pleasant conversationalist, who seemed to have extensive contacts in the highest circles. And as it turned out, we shared a common passion, since Sir Umar was apparently just as enthusiastic a chessplayer as I was!

I had learned the rules of the game from my father when I was a child. Later I joined a chess circle in Nottinghamshire, thus getting a first glimpse at the truly magical games of Lasker, Capablanca and Alekhine. Unfortunately, my law studies had the effect that I got out of practice and thus could only play on rare occasions. Therefore, I was very pleased when my new travel companion challenged me to compete on the chessboard. All in all, we would spend a nice time on board together. After dinner we smoked a pipe and had a nightcap before we made an appointment to play two games the next morning. With hindsight, the first evening on board couldn't have turned out much better for me.

In view of this development, I was grateful that my father had not sent me to India by plane. I decided that he deserved to know about the good news, and therefore I sent him a short cable that same evening. If

I could further deepen my friendship with the Indian, it would be my first diplomatic success without much effort. Certainly, this would be favorable for my career, and I already imagined the puzzled faces of my new superiors in Delhi during the first general briefing, the moment I mentioned my new diplomatic contacts.

I only hoped that my level of play would be sufficient to compete with the prince. And I remembered that I had recently heard about another Indian whose masterful chess had caused quite a sensation in England and some other European countries. Unfortunately, I had forgotten this master's name.

Well, now I could only wait what the future would bring.

