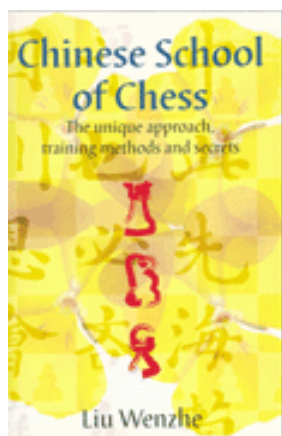




SKITTLES
ROOM



The Mysterious Chess Life of Rudolph L. Sze

by Olimpiu G. Urcan

In 1898, Ching-Chang, the chess automaton with Chinese features, which was usually displayed at the Eden Musèe, visited Philadelphia. Besides posing as soulless machinery, Ching-Chang fed the fantasies of many American admirers of the Royal Game. After all, there were no actual flesh-and-blood Chinese for experienced chess players to cross swords with over the checkered board. Ching-Chang was built on the prototype of the Turk, its predecessor, but its features were Oriental rather than Arabic. Thus spectators would have felt a deeper awe from being challenged at their own game by an even far-more distant character. Of course, inside the mechanical apparatus there was a concealed operator, who was usually an indigenous expert. As with any automaton, mechanical ingenuity, deception and illusion were at work. Yet with Ching-Chang, stereotyping helped to manufacture a grand oddity: a *Chinaman* playing the Game of Kings against the visitors who came to see the wonder of the day.

In America of the early 20th century, the biased perceptions and stereotypical images of Orientals were fully evident. In the archives of the Daniel K. E. Ching Collection of the Chinese Historical Society of America, there is a late 19th century American trade-card for a pest control product called "Rough on Rats." It depicted a Chinese male eating a rodent. The advertising premise was based on the stereotype that the Chinese eat rats and mice, and therefore the Chinese can serve as mascots for good exterminators. Such offensive, racist and negative exposure was common at that time. As a rule, for an Oriental to be portrayed in a genuine positive light in early America, he must have done something really extraordinary.



The Coming Man – John Chinaman: Uncle Sam Introduces Eastern Barbarism in Western Civilization. Cartoon originally published in *The Harper's Weekly*, Vol. 23, 1879

The Chinese immigration in America began in the middle of the 19th century, encouraged by the development of the American West and the Californian Gold Rush. At first the immigrants were welcomed, but, in 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act (in effect until 1943) prevented any Chinese, without families already in the U.S., from entering the country. It was the first time in U.S. history that a racial group was banned from entering America. In 1910, the Angel Island Inspection Center was built in San Francisco, where all Chinese immigrants were interrogated and, if denied permission to enter the country, they were detained in camp-like barracks or immediately deported. It took quite some time for the American authorities to improve the treatment of the Chinese immigrants, whose poor treatment was rooted in misperceptions and negative portrayals of “the Other.”

Devoid of a positive image, the Chinese became a “Chinaman.” Quarantined in his Chinatown, he was pigeonholed as alien, sneaky, inscrutable, a gold-digger and inveterate gambler, who associated with unlawful throngs and secret societies. When the white laborers rallied to stop Chinese Immigration, they chanted, “The Chinese Must Go!,” and “Rough on Rats” changed its slogan to “They Must Go,” referring not only to the rats but to the Chinese as well. With such widespread animosity, it took decades for the Chinese immigrants to be recognized as full-fledged U.S. citizens. Until then, and this was valid for the beginning of the 20th century as well, even the Chinese diplomats, merchants or students were not entirely exempt from negative stereotyping.

One thing that fostered a healthier relationship between the Americans and

the Chinese immigrants was the brilliant academic results of the Chinese students enrolled at East Coast Universities. Through their hard work and diligence, they gradually garnered a more positive perception of their race, and proved that Western bias was simply shallow and detrimental.

The American chess aficionados of the early 20th century regarded many chess facts, which seem so common to the contemporary eye, as a curiosity. News about the unexpected proficiency of female chess players, or the unsuspected chess skills of some powerful statesmen, or about European immigrants with a great prowess at the Royal Game was frequently reported in the papers. While these, and many others, were “oddities” that fed the cravings of the masses, the best of them simply stunned the average American chess amateur; having a Chinaman as an expert at the Royal Game was one of them. Nevertheless, it did happen and it attracted the attention of journalists, who otherwise had no interest in chess endeavors.

While the skill of the Turk was familiar by the beginning of the 20th century, the sight of an “individual of yellow race” defeating Western chess experts at their own game created quite a scene. In consequence, the chess reporters’ quills registered it for posterity, even if such happenings were truly rare on American and European soil. Thanks to such notes, no matter how scarce, one is able to chronicle the way in which America was spellbound, even if just for a couple of years, by the chess wit of a Chinese chess player on its own ground.



Dr. Alfred Sze
The Kansas City Times
September 16, 1922

If a Chinese happened to achieve something outstanding, the event would

turn into a curiosity item. For instance, when *The Mansfield News* of June 13, 1910 announced that “Rudolph Sze, a Chinese boy, has just walked away with the University of Pennsylvania scholarship which is yearly awarded by competitive examination to a District of Columbia high-school student.” Certainly the item was seen as interesting news primarily because Sze was Chinese. Had the editor of *The Mansfield News* known that Sze was a redoubtable chess expert by that time, then that particular piece of news would have been considerably expanded for an even greater impact.

Rudolph L. Sze was born around 1890 in Shanghai, China. He was sent by the Chinese government to study in America in the late 1890s, most probably with another group of Chinese students. The roots of Rudolph’s family remain unclear. It is very possible that he was related with two brothers who shared the same surname: Henry Sze and Alfred Sze. They came from a “high caste” and their father was the head of a large family and the superintendent of the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company. Henry and Alfred studied at Cornell University, and Alfred Sze engaged in a brilliant political career in the decades to come. In 1913, he was appointed Chinese Minister to lead his countries legation in Washington. It is only conjecture that Rudolph was related to Henry and Alfred, but it is very plausible.

In the fall of 1906, Rudolph was enrolled for courses at Central High-School in Washington. He was a brilliant student, who distinguished himself by winning multiple Academic awards. In fact, *The Washington Post* of June 17, 1908, reported that he was awarded a diploma by a Justice of the Supreme District Court. “All of the graduates got applause,” the journalist wrote, “but Sze, a Chinese boy, received somewhat of an ovation. He smiled in an oriental fashion and seemed the happiest mortal in the world.” Two years later, Sze’s happiness must have been even greater when he was awarded a special scholarship by the University of Pennsylvania. *The Washington Post* of June 5, 1910, wrote that “Sze has been one of the school’s star pupils throughout his course. Sze is also one of the finest chess players in the city. His colleagues wish him every success in his college career.” And according to *The American Chess Bulletin* of February 1911, Sze “acquired his experience in chess in Washington.”



Emanuel Lasker
The Suburbanite Economist
July 6, 1907

That Sze was much stronger than the average college player was discovered by none other than Emanuel Lasker. For the world champion was defeated by the 20-year-old Central High School student in a simultaneous exhibition on 29 boards, given in Washington during the spring of 1910. Lasker finished 22-4 with 3 draws. The score of the game was circulated worldwide:

Em. Lasker – Rudolph L. Sze

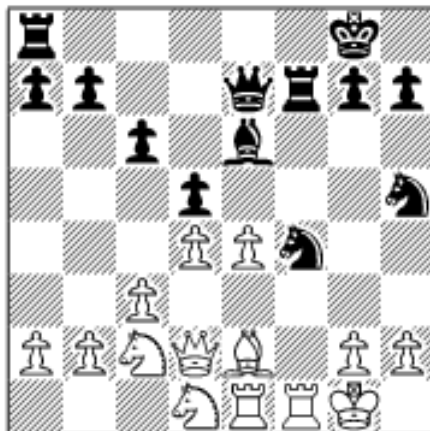
Washington D.C., Simultaneous Display

April 22, 1910 [C40]

Notes from *The Hereford Times*; *The American Chess Bulletin*, 1910, page 124; *The Nebraska State Journal*, August 21, 1910

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 f5 (With the courage of youth! Few older players would dare to venture this unsound counter-attack in a game with Dr. Lasker.) **3.exf5** (A weak reply that makes Black's unsound move perfectly sound. The strongest continuation, probably, is 2.Nxe5 Nf6 3.d4, but 2.d4 is also better than 2.exf5.) **3...d6 4.d4** (4.g4 would be met by 4...h5.) **4...e4 5.Bg5 Be7 6.Bxe7 Qxe7 7.Nfd2 Bxf5 8.Nc3 Nf6 9.Be2 O-O 10.Nc4 d5 11.Ne3** (If 11.Ne5, then 11...c5 would have been an excellent reply.) **11...Be6 12.O-O Nbd7 13.Nb5 Nb6 14.c3 c6 15.Na3 Rf7 16.Nac2 Nbd7 17.Qd2 Nf8 18.Rae1 Ng6** (All played like a master. Black has now a most promising position.) **19.f3 Nf4 20.Nd1** (Much better is 20.Kh1. The text move, which is curiously weak, may be taken as an indication that the champion, who was contesting twenty-eight other games, had by this time grown fatigued.)
[Even after 20.Kh1, Sze would have kept excellent attacking chances:

20...Raf8! 21.Nf5 Bxf5 22.Qxf4 exf3 23.Bxf3 Ne4 – Urcan] **20...N6h5!**
21.fxe4



21...Qg5 (Threatening to win the queen by Nh3+, as well as mate on the move.)
22.Nce3 Nxc2 23.Kh1 Nxe1 24.Rxe1 Raf8 25.Rg1 Qh4 26.exd5 (Which hardly mends matters, but the game was lost in any case.) **26...Bxd5+ 27.Nxd5 Qe4+** Black resigned (Black will have at least a rook ahead; while being forced to interpose with the bishop, in order to prevent mate in two.)

Evidently, such an outcome proved positive for the Chinese chess player's future. His scholarly wit happily met his playing strength and the University of Pennsylvania readily offered him a board. The players' of the University's Chess Club, led by Norman T. Whitaker, one of the strongest experts of the country by then, must have been very much aware of Sze's chess skill, since immediately following his enrollment, Sze was asked to take second board on the University team. *The New York Times* of December 15, 1910, announced that "Norman T. Whitaker, the President of the University of Pennsylvania Chess Club, and G.F. Weiner, with L.R. Sze as an alternate, will represent the university in the triangular meet between Cornell, Brown, and the University of Pennsylvania on Dec. 27, 28, 29 and 30." The team was doing well in the Triangular College League Tournament, mainly because of Whitaker's efforts, but the need for fresh blood needed to be addressed. The University of Pennsylvania Chess Club, toughened by Sze, finished 2nd in the Triangular League Tournament in late December 1910, behind Cornell University Chess Club but ahead of College of the City of New York. Sze's games were closely followed with the greatest interest by those present, as indicated by the surviving press accounts. When Penn defeated the College of the City of New York team in late December, *The New York Times* of January 1, 1911 wrote of Sze as "a player of exceptional ability."

The *American Chess Bulletin* of February 1911 noted that the team "was reinforced by Rudolph L. Sze." Whitaker, Sze and M. J. Teltelbaum, the three chess players of the University of Pennsylvania, inaugurated its great chain of success on the checkered board in the next years to come. In April 1911, the team toured New England, where they played matches against Harvard University, Yale University and Brown University Chess Clubs. Whitaker and Sze invariably scored on the top boards, which must have motivated Whitaker to declare, in the *American Chess Bulletin* of January 1911, that "the University of Pennsylvania must be considered in any claim for the intercollegiate championship; also for the international intercollegiate championship."

Sze also played in some individual tournaments. In late February 1911, he unsuccessfully tried to qualify for the New York State Championship. Sze lost to J. H. Stapfer, the eventual winner of the event, and drew with S. Froehlich, but won from E.R. Perry, the former leader of the Harvard team. Subsequently, Sze frequented the Franklin Chess Club and participated, with inconclusive results, in the Club's championships. Below is an interesting game from the tournament for the championship of Philadelphia and the George W. Childs Cup, held in March 1911. It was announced that "Mr. Sze, a young Chinese student of the University of Pennsylvania, plays a most creditable defense to Bonsall's attack in the Blackmar gambit."

Bonsall – Rudolph L. Sze

Franklin Chess Club Championship

March 1911 [D00]

From the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 19, 1911

1.d4 d5 2.e4 dxe4 3.c3 e6 4.f3 Bd6 5.Be3 exf3 6.Nxf3 Nf6 7.Bd3 b6 8.0-0 Nbd7 9.Nbd2 Bb7 10.Qe1 Qe7 11.Qh4 0-0-0 12.c4 Kb8 13.a3 c5 14.b4 e5 15.bxc5



15...Nxc5 16.dxe5 Nxd3 17.Bg5 Nxe5 18.Rae1 Nxf3+ 19.Nxf3 Qc7 20.a4 h6 21.Be3 g5 22.Qf2 Ng4 23.Qb2 Nxe3 24.Rxe3 Bc5 25.Rfe1 Rhe8 26.Kf2 Rd3 27.a5 Rdx3 28.Rxe3 Rxe3 29.Kf1 Qd7 30.Qc2 Bxf3 31.gxf3 Qh3+ White resigned

On 30 May 1911, Sze participated in the match between the Manhattan Chess Club of New York and the Franklin Chess Club of Philadelphia. He played

on the 5th board, behind recognized experts such as S. T. Sharp, B. Milnes, W. P. Shipley, and A. K. Robinson, but ahead of strong players such as J. W. Young, S. W. Bampton, H. G. Voigt, A. Goldberg and S. Mlotkowski. William M. De Visser tipped his king in the face of Sze's counter-attack:

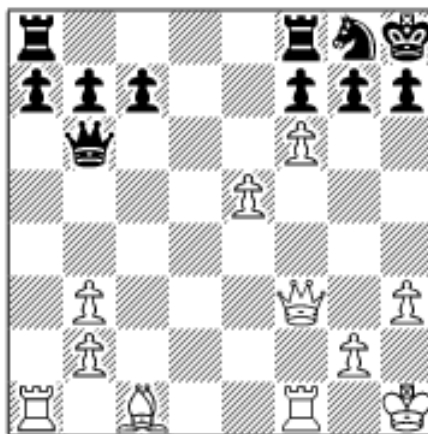
W. M. De Visser – Rudolph L. Sze

Manhattan Chess Club – Franklin Chess Club

May 30, 1911 [C54]

From *The American Chess Bulletin*, July 1911, page 147; the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 18, 1911

1.e4 e5 2.Bc4 Bc5 3.Nf3 Nc6 4.c3 Nf6 5.O-O Nxe4 6.Bd5 Nf6 7.Bxc6 dxc6 8.Nxe5 O-O 9.d4 Bd6 10.f4 c5 11.Nd2 cxd4 12.cxd4 Bxe5 13.dxe5 Qd4+ 14.Kh1 Ng4 15.Qe2 Qe3 16.Qf3 Qb6 17.Nb3 Be6 18.h3 Bxb3 19.axb3 Nh6 20.f5 Kh8 21.f6 Ng8



22.Ra4 g6 23.Be3 Qb5 24.Bd4 Rfe8
 25.Rc1 c6 26.Rc5 Qb6 27.Rca5 Qd8
 28.Rxa7 Rxa7 29.Bxa7 Rxe5 30.Qc3
 Rf5 31.Bc5 Rf1+ 32.Kh2 Nxf6 33.Qc4
 Qc7+ 34.g3 Rf3 35.Qh4 Qd8 36.Rf4
 Qd2+ 37.Kh1 Qe1+ 38.Bg1 Rxf4
 39.Qxf4 Qe4+ 40.Qxe4 Nxe4 White
 resigned

In the annual championship of the Franklin Chess Club for 1911, Sze finished on the 7th position with 8 wins and 6 losses, behind Martinez, Mlotkowski, Milnes, Sharp, Voigt, and Goldberg, but ahead of Stadelman, Robinson and Bampton. Sze's loss to Mlotkowski, one of the strongest participants, was published in *The American Chess Bulletin* of August 1911 with the winner's annotations. Sze blundered in time trouble.

S. Mlotkowski – Rudolph Sze

Franklin Chess Club Championship

August 1911 [C52]

From *The American Chess Bulletin*, August 1911, page 176

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.b4 Bxb4 5.c3 Ba5 6.d4 exd4 7.O-O dxc3
 8.Qb3 Qf6 9.e5 Qg6 10.Nxc3 Nge7 11.Ba3 O-O 12.Rad1 b5 13.Nxb5 Rb8
 14.Qa4 Re8 15.Bd3 Qh5



16.h4 a6 17.Na7 Bb4 18.Nxc8 Nxc8
 19.Bb2 Nb6 20.Qc2 Be7 21.Bf5 Bxh4
 22.g4 Qh6 23.Bc1 g5 24.Kg2 Qg7
 25.Rh1 Nxe5 26.Nxh4 gxh4 27.Rxh4
 Ng6 28.Rh3 Re5 29.Rdh1 Rbe8
 30.Rxh7 Qxh7 31.Rxh7 Kxh7
 32.Bxg6+ fxg6 33.Qxc7 R5e6 34.Be3
 Rc8 35.Qh2+ Kg8 36.Bd4 Nd5
 37.Qh8+ Kf7 38.Qxc8 Black resigned

In the autumn of 1911, Sze again met Emanuel Lasker. Walter Penn Shipley noted, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of November 26, 1911, that Lasker offered a simultaneous exhibition at the Franklin Chess Club, preceded by a lecture on the "Joy in Chess." At the conclusion of the event, Sze was indisputably one of the very few players in the country that experienced the rare joy of twice defeating the world champion in less than two years. Lasker finished 17-2 with 2 draws, with H. G. Voigt and Rudolph Sze scoring the only two wins. Shipley wrote in his column: "The following was the first game lost by Dr. Lasker in his recent simultaneous exhibition in this

city. The winner, Mr. R. Sze, is a native-born Chinaman, and at present a student at the University of Pennsylvania. The notes to the game are by Dr. Lasker.”

Em. Lasker – Rudolph L. Sze

Philadelphia, Franklin Chess Club

Simultaneous Display

November, 11 1911 [A02]

Notes by Lasker from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 26, 1911

1.f4 e5 2.fxe5 d6 3.exd6 Bxd6 4.Nf3 Nf6 5.d4 Ng4 (This threatens ...Nxb2, and if 6.Nxb2 Qh4+, with mate in two following. But the menace is easily averted. It would have been better to continue by castling and to press on the e5-square.) **6.Qd3 O-O** (If 6...Nxb2 7.Qe4+, then 8.Nxb2 would win.) **7.e4 Nc6** (And if now 7...Nxb2, 8.e5 follows.) **8.e5 Re8 9.Be2 Nb4 10.Qd2** (A mistake. The queen should have returned to d1. Now Black has a pretty move that prevents White from castling and thus keeps the white king continually exposed.)



10...Ne3 (Of course, 11.Qxe3 Nxc2+ wins the queen. The position of this knight is of decisive strength.) **11.Na3 Nbd5 12.exd6 Nf4 13.dxc7 Qf6 14.Qxe3 Nxc2+ 15.Kf2 Nxe3 16.Bxe3 Qe7 17.Nc4 b5 18.Nce5 f6 19.Bxb5 fxe5 20.Bxe8 Qxe8 21.Nxe5 Bb7 22.Rhg1 Rc8 23.c4 Rxc7 24.Rad1 Qh5 25.Bf4 Rf7 26.Kg3 g5** White resigned

In the last months of 1911, Whitaker left Pennsylvania for Washington. *The American Chess Bulletin* of January 1912 announced that Whitaker, “famous as the invincible representative of the University of Pennsylvania is now in Washington, D.C. where he is attending the Georgetown University Law School. He keeps in touch with matters chessical at the Washington Chess and Checker Club.” Whitaker’s empty place was filled by Sze, whose responsibilities increased by late October 1911. He was crowned as the new President of the University of Pennsylvania Chess Club, as announced by the *Iowa City Daily Press* of December 27, 1911.

CHINESE PLAYER
IN KING ROW

Philadelphia, Nov. 2 Rudolph Sze a young Chinese chess player who is expected to win the intercollegiate championship for the University of Pennsylvania this winter, has been chosen president of the University Chess Club.

Iowa City Daily Press, December 27, 1911

The Washington Post of December 24, 1911 noted that “Sze, the Chinese Player, Will Take Place of Whitaker.” Sze’s performances on the top board heralded good news for the University of Pennsylvania Chess Club. *The Pennsylvania Gazette and Bulletin* of December 30, 1911 announced that Cornell and Penn divided the honors in the 13th edition of the Triangular League Tournament, both teams scoring 6 points each, adding that “Rudolph Sze, a Chinaman, scored 3½ of Pennsylvania’s six points.” *The American Chess Bulletin* of February 1912 noted as well that “Norman T. Whitaker, Pennsylvania’s brilliant representative, was replaced by Rudolph Sze, who also went through the tournament without a defeat.” *The Syracuse Herald* of December 30, 1911 inserted a similar small note under the headline “CHINAMAN CHESS STAR.” *The New York Times* of the same day saw Sze as the key player that brought Penn to the front:

TRIANGULAR COLLEGE CHESS ENDS IN A TIE

Sze, Chinese Player, Brings
Pennsylvania’s Score Even
with Cornell.

The New York Times, December 30, 1911

In February and April 1912, Sze guided his team to spectacular victories against Yale University. Sze also tied for 3rd – 4th in the Pennsylvania State Chess Championship. Subsequently, Sze played in the Franklin Chess Championship, a knock-out event, and *The American Chess Bulletin* of June 1912 mentioned him as surviving the first rounds, but he withdrew from the event before playing his game with Sharp, which was decisive for determining the prize winners. In the same period, Sze played for the Franklin Chess Club team, holding the 10th board against the Manhattan Chess Club:

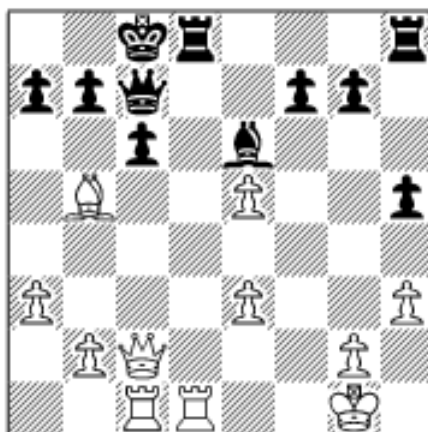
Rudolph L. Sze – L. Rosen

Franklin C.C. – Manhattan C.C.

June 1912 [C44]

From *The American Chess Bulletin*, July 1912, page 155

1.e4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3.c3 d5 4.exd5 Qxd5 5.cxd4 Nc6 6.Nf3 Bg4 7.Be2 0-0-0 8.Nc3 Qa5 9.Be3 Nf6 10.0-0 Bd6 11.h3 h5 12.a3 Qf5 13.Bd3 Qd7 14.Qc2 Be6 15.Rfd1 Ne7 16.Ne5 Bxe5 17.dxe5 Nfd5 18.Bb5 c6 19.Nxd5 Nxd5 20.Rac1 Nxe3 21.fxe3 Qc7



22.Rd6 Rxd6 23.exd6 Qxd6 24.Qa4 Qd2 25.Rc3 Qxb2 26.Qa5 Bd5 27.Bf1 Rd8 28.Rd3 Qb6 29.Qc3 g6 30.Be2 Be6 31.Kf2 Rxd3 32.Bxd3 Qb3 33.Qh8+ Kd7 34.Qd4+ Qd5 35.Qc3 Qb3 36.Qd4+ Ke8 37.a4 Qb6 38.Qe5 Qb3 39.Qd4 a6 40.Kg3 Qd5 41.Qxd5 Bxd5 42.e4 Bb3 43.a5 c5 44.Kf3 c4 45.Be2 Kd7 46.Ke3 c3 47.Kd3 Bc4+ White resigned

By the end of December, Penn would emerge as the victor of the 14th Triangular College Chess League Championship, confirming their good performances in recent years. *The New York Times* of December 22, 1912 remarked that “the steady play of Rudolph Sze” resulted in the victory of the University of Pennsylvania Chess Club. The same happened in 1913, when Sze led his team to victory in the 15th edition of the same tournament. The Chinese player’s strong play was followed by periodic mentions in the local press. So it happened, when *The Syracuse Herald* of December 27, 1912, remarked that “the Chinese chess player is largely responsible for the two victories of the University of Pennsylvania in the inter-collegiate chess tournament.”

SZE, CHINESE CHESS EXPERT, WINS MATCHES

New York, Dec. 27.—Sze, the Chinese chess expert, was largely responsible for the two victories of the University of Pennsylvania in the intercollegiate chess tournament

The Syracuse Herald, December 27, 1912

The peak of his ascension was reached in March 1913, when Oxford and Cambridge decided to issue a challenge for the Rice Trophy. According to *The Atlanta Constitution* of March 10, 1913, Sze was selected to play first board. Unfortunately, the cable match was postponed and eventually cancelled because of the British students' pending examinations.

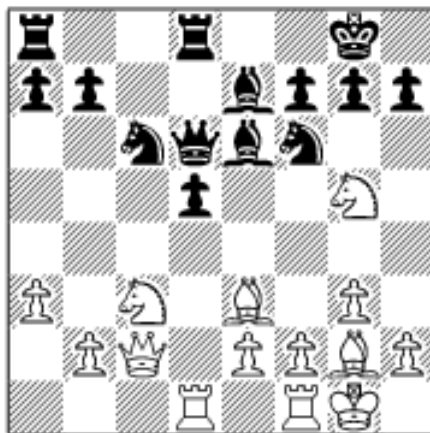
Sze also played in the Pennsylvania State Correspondence tournaments in 1912 and 1913 and two games have survived:

M. Morgan – Rudolph L. Sze

Pennsylvania State Correspondence Tournament, 1913 [D33]

Notes from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April, 6, 1913

1.d4 d5 2.Nf3 c5 3.c4 e6 4.cxd5 exd5 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.g3 Be6 7.Bg2 Nf6 8.0-0 Be7 9.dxc5 Qa5 10.a3 Qxc5 11.Be3 Qd6 12.Qc2 0-0 13.Rad1 Rfd8 14.Ng5 (This fine move apparently wins the game. We have been unable to find any satisfactory defense for Black.)



14...g6 (Likely the best reply, as White threatened to win the d-pawn.) **15.Qa4** (Threatening Qh4.) **15...Qc7 16.Rd2 Qa5 17.Qb3** (There is no answer to this move. If White, however, had played 17.Qh4, then Black could have replied with 17...d4.) **17...Rd7 18.Rfd1 Ng4** (If 18...Rad8, White replies 19.Bf4 followed by e4.) **19.Nxe6 Nxe3 20.fxe3 fxe6 21.Bxd5** Black resigned

While Sze was not at his best in the game above, but the game below received high praise in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: "The following game shows Rudolph Sze in his best form. His play throughout is of an unusually high order. Captain Kaiser makes no obvious

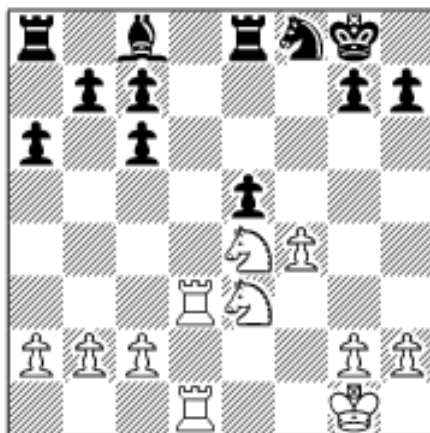
errors, and yet his game, after his seventeenth move, is slowly disintegrated by magnificent play of the university student.”

Rudolph Sze – Captain J.A. Kaiser

Pennsylvania State Correspondence Tournament, 1913 [C84]

Notes from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April, 6, 1913

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.d4 (We prefer 5.0-0.) **5...exd4** (The best reply.) **6.0-0 Be7 7.e5 Ne4 8.Nxd4 Nc5 9.Bxc6 dxc6 10.Nc3 0-0 11.Be3 Ne6 12.Nf5 Bc5 13.Ne4 Qxd1 14.Raxd1 Bxe3 15.Nxe3 Re8 16.f4 Nf8 17.Rd3 f6** (Captain Kaiser has entirely underrated the possibilities of the attack of White and apposes command. He has counted on this combination as either winning a pawn or giving him the better game. His opponent, however, was apparently prepared for the continuation and sacrifices his e-pawn in order to obtain an overwhelming attack.) **18.Rfd1 fxe5**



19.f5 h6 20.g4 Nh7 21.h4 Nf6 22.Ng3 b6 23.g5 hxg5 24.hxg5 Nh7 25.Ne4 Nf8 (Captain Kaiser afterwards pointed out that had he now played 25...Bxf5 followed by 26...Nxg5, he would have had almost, if not quite, the equivalent for the piece sacrificed.) **26.g6 c5 27.Ng5 Bb7 28.Ng4 Nxg6 29.fxg6 e4 30.Rh3 Bc8 31.Nf7 Kf8 32.Rg3 Bxg4 33.Rxg4 e3 34.Rf4 e2 35.Re1 Ke7 36.Rxe2+ Kd7 37.Ne5+ Black resigned**

In the years following their University graduation, the ritual of passing from intercollegiate matches to seasoned Club or State tournaments marked the lives of those who achieved their fame with the Royal Game. For Rudolph Sze, this moment is veiled by an inscrutable mystery. After he achieved fame in Pennsylvania and the neighboring states during 1910 and 1914, he all but disappeared. It is certain that Sze sailed to Shanghai in the early stages of the Great War. Many Chinese students, who studied in America at the time, were obliged to return to China and practice their profession for at least a couple of years. As *The Syracuse Herald* of January 7, 1912 wrote in an ample report about the Chinese students in America, “all were interested in American costumes, laws and methods of government, and are anxious to take back to China with them all the information they can possibly obtain from the big successful republic of the West, which will be of the use to the new republic of the East.” Sze would return to the United States via San Francisco, on board the steamer *China* in September 1916, accompanied by a friend, Bn Cah Chang. He returned to Philadelphia, but there is no mention of him returning to chess. According to burial records at the Philadelphia National Cemetery, Rudolph Sze died on June 14, 1938.

Beyond Sze's ambiguous biographical data, the little we know about his chess life shows that Pennsylvania's so-called "Chinaman" was a pioneer in breaking down the Western stereotype that Orientals (and others) were incapable of good results on the checkered board. This misconception would be further shaken by the more spectacular presence of other sublime players – Sultan Khan and Miss Fatima, as well as reports from the travels of Boris Kostić and Alexander Alekhine to the Far East.

The Asian influence in chess has been growing step by step, but negative stereotypes die hard. When Iceland lost to China at the Buenos Aires Olympiad in 1978, J. H. Donner was reported to have said: "How could a Western grandmaster lose to a Chinaman?" And, as divine punishment for such unfortunate words, Donner himself would lose a memorable game to Liu Wenzhe a few days later.

The short chess life of Rudolph Sze proved that the Game of Kings can bring together people of different races in a competition of skill, while creating a dialogue between opponents, who would otherwise be incompatibly separated by their differences. The chess community of Pennsylvania overcame its prejudices and embraced Sze's talent. Passing beyond the stereotypes, for a couple of good years Rudolph Sze, the Chinese expert, was their hero.

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