

Tomodachi – Friend

“Go brought us together – it was your life, for me it is a precious treasure. You were my best Go-friend. I loved you as a friend even when thousands of kilometers parted us, and now a whole life. You will remain my friend forever. And if there is anything I can do for you or for your loved ones, I will do it with pleasure!

I know that we will see each other again, in another life, at another time. I will still think of you many times, and in my thoughts the times we spent together will come alive again. I enjoyed those times so much! Our talks, our games, our walks in the mountains, our undertakings, our trips, our times together. I will miss you!!!”

These first lines I wrote shortly after I heard about the terrible occurrence.

When I asked Nakayama Noriyuki (a well known Japanese Go-professional) a few years ago what he liked most about Go, he answered: “That I found many friends all over the world”. And he was not the only one who gave me this answer. I know that this would have been your answer too.

I do not want to list all your successes in Go and your good deeds here. Your Go-strength and the number of friends do speak for themselves. Besides that, the journal of the German Go-Federation will give a broad report on your career. But it is important for us to appreciate, one more time, what kind of person you were.

It was surprising that even people who did not have the pleasure of your company very often asked or called me to hear more details of the circumstances of your death. But most of all they wanted to tell me what a wonderful person you were.

We all loved your openness, your friendship, your kindness, your unpretentiousness, your readiness to help, and much more. You never turned loud or became angry. You were in all possible ways a peaceful and tolerant person (unless you were forced to kill someone's group on the Go-board, but even for that you were probably sorry).

You were ready to share your knowledge with others and always careful not to put your pupils down. Something for which some others envied you. Go was your life, but it never dominated you nor did you become fanatic about it. You kept your friendly way until the end, and since days now I see your nice smile in my thoughts. The loss for the Go-world cannot be compensated. You were our best, our figurehead, our idol, our representative and link to Asia in matters concerning Go. You were always responsive to all kind of questions and you always did what you could when asked.

Dear Hans, for all of us who knew you well your death is almost impossible to comprehend. Most of us could not and did not want to believe it when hearing about it. Every day one hears and sees the most terrible things that happen in the world, but that something like this could happen to one of our loved ones, a dear friend, for some an example to be followed and an idol – this is something none of us would even have dreamt of. Yes, you were an adventurer and you had, like other people who are born under the astrological sign of Libra, the dare-devil in you.

I accompanied you a few times on the bicycle in Tokio. I am not the most careful person, but you had your own traffic-rules and managed some pretty dangerous

situations. You made difficult mountain trips on your own. You liked to bring yourself to your limits and to demand the utmost of yourself. Besides that, you also had limitless trust in the people who guided and accompanied you, but that it would end like **this** nobody would have thought.

Had I been told about your death **only**, I firstly would have thought of a traffic-accident or an accident in the mountains. But the truth is much more than just a bad joke. Something like this only happens in wildwest movies. How big is the chance that these things happen? 1:10.000, 1:100.000? It is really unprobable. And yet it did happened to you.

Almost everybody immediately remembers a situation in which he or she was pretty close to a bad end but where he or she survived or at least was saved from worse. You did not have this luck.

Why **YOU**? This is what your family and nearest friends must ask. To this question there is no satisfying answer.

As much as some people may trust that you will be reborn someday – something of which **YOU** were convinced. But does that help us here and now? We cannot share any more time with you in this life. We cannot grow old together with you. We can no longer laugh with you about jokes, cannot play together anymore, not talk, walk nor do anything else with you anymore. We can only remember what it was like to do these things with you. All those beautiful moments we shared with you. Is that a consolation? I would have preferred to remember those times together with you, with a cup of green tea at hand, sitting in an armchair, with gray hair and a wise nod of the head. It is a real pity that this will remain a dream forever.

Hans, you definitely died too young. God knows why.

It can happen to anybody, anytime and some people get a second, sometimes a third or even a fourth chance. We do not know what the cosmic laws keep in store for anyone of us and we therefore cannot judge on what death means for somebody. What we do know for sure is what death does to **US** when a loved one suddenly departs. For those who stay behind it is sad in any case.

I know that in time I will remember our mutual moments with happiness and some melancholy. But for now – now I am only sad when I think that the only thing that's left is the past we shared. Unfortunately there will be no future with you as Hans Pietsch.

We have gathered here altogether to say goodbye to you for the last time and we wish and hope that you are here among us and that you are thankful to see all of us together for one more time.

As you were open to esoteric themes and especially interested in theories about reincarnation, you were actually not afraid of death. You rather saw it as a point of development which brings us to a higher level of consciousness.

We also know about these theories, have heard about death experiences, we marvel at the fact that buddhists see rebirth as something self-evident and obvious, and we

hope that you will not be dissapointed. But **WE** stay here – without you, and that is our problem. The loss of a loved one. What does it help us if we knew for sure that you will be among us again in a short time and new existence. It would not be our Hans Pietsch anymore and even if a part of your being returned, it would not be **YOU**.

The indians celebrate a festival for their dead ones because they are so happy for the person passed away that he or she or it is now free from suffering the earthly existence and will now enter the endless hunting grounds. In a being of total bliss.

That is where you belong, my dear friend, for you had so many wonderful qualities that it is difficult for me to see you anywhere else. You had such an admirable lightheartedness, which many would themselves have liked to have. Many people admired, honoured and loved you. The memories of you will from now on accompany us to our end. We will bring a toast to you in the good hope that you are well and we will meet again someday.

Finally, I would like to tell the story “Two friends” from the book “Die Mitte des Himmels”, and after that let us remember you in silence.

Two friends

At the time of the division of the empire into the northern and the southern dynasty in the year 465, there lived two good friends, Zhu Dao-zhen and Liu-Kuo.

They took care to play Go with each other every day.

After eight years of friendship, Dao-zhen died all of a sudden.

Some months later, Liu-Kuo was sitting in his study room reading a book, when he heard a knock on the door and somebody brought in a letter. This letter was obviously written by his old friend Dao-zhen. Liu opened it and read:

“With every thought I am with our games, that made us so much pleasure. It is bitter here without my good friend. I now know where people go in the end. I take care of the Go-board and wait for you.”

After Liu had read the letter he closed his eyes and joined his friend to play Go again.

Good bye Hans!

Stefan Budig - Hamburg, the 22.01.2003