

Januarius Sseruwagi has passed away.

Januarius Sseruwagi was a great, charming and versatile man. He was a philosopher, theater maker, historian and a thinker. In Uganda he finalized several studies at the Makerere University: Dance and Drama, Philosophy and Fine Arts. Januarius was a warm-hearted and especially a fun-loving man, who always managed to entertain people with his sense of humor and heartiness.

I remember well, when he gave a lecture at the WUK in Vienna about Ugandan kingdoms. He was just the right person for that as he had a broad knowledge about his country. Januarius always managed to range between the two continents - Africa and Europe. He was keen to explain and demonstrate the complexity of our globalized world, of which he never was tired making it readily comprehensible.

I also remember how Januarius used to cook dinners in Vienna for the theater troupe of Alex Mukulu in order to give them a feeling of being at home. Furthermore, I remember when Januarius wrote a play about the Namugongo martyrs, where he also tried to demonstrate the links between Austria and Uganda. He was performing this theater play with his colleagues at education centers, schools and other relevant places. As the only „Muzungu“, I was allowed to act in the role of the missionary, representing the colonial master equipped with executive case and candies. Januarius and the crew really had fits of laughter when I threw the candies to them. At the same time, they were shocked to see this visible demonstration of their own history of colonial times.

From 1997-2002 Januarius was teaching Luganda at the Institute for African Studies in Vienna. With great commitment and passion he imparted „his“ language to his students. He also developed a Luganda-German dictionary. In Vienna Januarius was studying business economics and he completed his Master's degree at the Institute for African Studies.

Januarius wrote an article in a catalogue for the exhibition of contemporary Ugandan artists. This article demonstrated his great knowledge about art and the view of the western dominated world of art. He enjoyed to show the simple-mindedness of the western art market! Already at that time he formulated important and sustainable thoughts, which are now slowly being understood.

Januarius lived for many years with his wife Hariette in Vienna before he returned to Uganda in order to fulfill his visions there. He also started to work with Karl Wipfler at the Austrian Consulate in Kampala, although he was not really a business man.

The transfer of knowledge was always important to him. In the last years he therefore put all efforts into the set-up of his own school in Seeta/Mukono, which he operated with great passion. His home in Seeta, where he lived with his family, was an appreciated meeting place. He regularly had visitors from Austria, who had the great chance and advantage to experience Uganda from a non-touristic side by sharing the everyday life of Januarius and his family. His home was influenced by his laughter and the interesting stories, which he always liked to share with his guests. Through living with Januarius, the versatility of this man became visible. He was not only the academic thinker and historian but also a caring and loving husband and father, who was loved and appreciated by his family.

On the 13th of March 2012, while driving with his wife and his two youngest children, Januarius had a bad car accident and was deadly injured. With him not only a great personality has gone but also a comprehensive encyclopedia of lived knowledge.

The Austrian Ugandan Friendship Association (AUFA) is mourning for him and offers its heartfelt condolences to the whole family. Januarius leaves behind a wife and five children. The Association has therefore established a donation account for the support of his family.

Michael Stadler, a friend of the deceased Januarius Sseruwagi and member of the Board of AUFA.

Revision of the text: Linda Zednicek and Thomas Pieringer, close friends of Januarius and his family as well as members of the Board.