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The ping pong friendship that changed the world

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Many years ago in 1971, the US table tennis team was at the World Championship in Japan. The team from the People's Republic of China was also there. This championship took place during the days of the Cold War and so the American and the Chinese players didn't even talk to each other. Glen Cowan, from the US team, didn't like the situation. One day, he saw a Chinese player and _____ him to play. They played together for 15 minutes, and Cowan _____ the US bus back to hotel.

Then, something surprising _____ . One of the Chinese players waved to Cowan from the Chinese bus. He _____ for a moment and then he _____ on the bus. But, the Chinese player didn't talk to him. Suddenly Zhuang Zedong, three times world champion, came up to Cowan. " What are you doing?" said the other Chinese players. "Don't talk to him! Don't make trouble!".

Zedong _____ Cowan a silk scarf. " I give you this to show the friendship of Chinese people to the American people," he said through a translator. Cowan _____ to give something back, but he didn't have anything with him.

Then the bus arrived at the hotel. There _____ lots of reporters. It was big news to see an American and a Chinese player together.

Later, Cowan _____ a T-shirt with a peace flag on it, and he gave it to Zedong. The two men became friends. In the same year, the US team got an invitation to visit China, and in February 1972, US president Richard Nixon _____ to China on a historic visit. Many people say that the two men and their friendship made a better relationship between their countries possible.

missed | thought | got | invited | were | went | gave | happened | wanted | bought

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