My Sifu Grandmaster Sifu Victor Kan

Students come and go. There are no exceptions for senior students due to their personal commitments. But they all still pay their respects to GM Kan whenever they see him. You don’t hear them slagging him off, do you?

Unfortunately, every family has a black sheep and recently GM Kan has had to lower himself to deal with that black sheep so the public would not be misled.

The tag of 20 years can only be attached to two of his students – Arthur Cann (26 years) and myself (21 years, the last 2 spent acting as Victor Kan’s assistant). Then comes Eric Richards (18 years). We still attend classes regularly and train hard to perfect forms and techniques that we learnt many years ago, but as any martial artist should know, learning the movements is one thing, understanding and perfecting is another. VING TSUN IS EASY TO LEARN BUT DIFFICULT TO MASTER. Hence the saying “Martial arts are a way of life”.

Back to GM Kan. Anyone doing Wing Chun should have heard of Grandmaster Kan’s skill and high standards. There’s a saying in the Wing Chun/Ving Tsun world that goes “if you haven’t heard of Victor Kan, then your knowledge of Ving Tsun is limited”.

As in any walk of life that involves a teacher/student relationship, a good teacher needs hard working and receptive students to produce excellence. In other words, without the dedication of his students, even a teacher of supreme skill such as GM Victor Kan cannot work miracles. From another angle, no matter how intelligent, hardworking the student is, if the teacher is no good, how can the student amount to anything?

On a lighter note, most people only see one side of GM Kan, his serious side in the school but outside when accompanying him to seminars and restaurants, I have found him to be different character. They don’t see the other side, amiable, fun-loving, and able to join in any conversation and be knowledgeable about most things. Obviously when it comes to his profession, he has to be a serious task master – how else can someone who has been away for some time return to the school and after only a few weeks revision, reach their old standard – something to be said about his hard line training methods.

One thing I must say about GM Kan is like any great artist, he always demands perfection. He treats everybody who joins his school as students and not customers. If you were a customer, you would always be right, but students cannot be right all of the time, otherwise they would already be the teacher.

For me GM Kan is a true Kung Fu master; even outside of the school his mind in Ving Tsun. For example, if we go to eat, he will park the car as near to the restaurant as possible. Now some may say that this is pure laziness but if you analyse further he is very fit, plays tennis regularly, golf and skis so it cannot be laziness, it can only be Ving Tsun principles, applied in everyday life i.e. conservation of energy, shortest distance between two points etc.

I have had many comments made to me by students past and present about my Chi Sau being the closest they have experienced to that of GM Kan. I am a humble man, so I find this hard to believe, so who knows, in another 20 years, maybe those comments may be true.

So finally, here’s to another 20 years training hard under Grandmaster Victor Kan.

By Grandmaster Kan’s Assistant Martin Bell