

TOBY MAN 文傳璧 (see True Light Old Girls)

Despite her name, Toby is female and an old girl of the Hong Kong True Light Middle School – my old school. I first noticed her when the girls said Toby got the highest marks in the school's compulsory IQ test. I then noticed she's good at drawing. We became very good friends and enjoyed chatting and laughing together. I appreciated her talents and tried to encourage her to take up art when leaving school.

One Summer, she came to my home and did a pencil drawing of me and I liked it every much. Many people who know me said Toby captured the true likeness and spirit of me. When I was a student at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London, I stayed with Margaret Morley, an RAM alumna. When Margaret saw this drawing, she said: “The portrait by Toby Man is excellent, has completely captured you.” I later heard that Toby went to the US to study art, and I was so happy for her. However, the road to becoming an artist can be rugged. I felt so sad when I heard that she was put out by difficulties encountered working as an artist, and changed her career to doing something that had nothing to do with the art.

I last saw Toby in Portland, Oregon. The photo shows Toby on the left; Kam, another True Light old girl, in the middle; and myself on the right. I dared not ask Toby about what happened to her career in the art. Whether one makes a name in the art world, I think it shows true talent to be able to capture a person's true likeness and spirit, and also show her feelings for me at the time of drawing. Before I was first diagnosed with cancer in 1993, many people liked to draw/paint/photograph me. However, I particularly like this Toby drawing of me. Her original drawing is included in the Display. As it's fading, I also show you a photocopy of it here.

Kam 歐錦嫦 (the old girl in the middle of the photo) was my best friend when I was at True Light. She runs a successful diagnostic company in Seattle. She later commissioned me twice. The first piece she commissioned is called “FABLE OF THE PHOENIX”, and was performed by my group Inter-Artes at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre in London.

Ho Wai-On (Ann-Kay)