

A conversation with
Gary Galvin



Master Willem Reeders aka Liu Seong trained many martial artists in the United States after World War II. Gary Galvin received a second degree orange sash directly from Willem Reeders in 1972. This edited interview from July 18, 2018 with Gary Galvin explains what he learned from Master Reeders in the late 1960s and early 70s.

Eric Lanious: When and where did you begin studying Kung Fu?

Gary Galvin: When I was a sophomore at SUNY Fredonia (1967-1968) I had a friend, who was a brown belt in Ishin Ryu karate. I had always been interested in karate and he agreed to teach me. It was basic blocking, striking and kicking techniques. One day I was practicing in the gym and a friend of mine, Tom Calcatier, saw me and asked me what style I was doing. I told him and he told me I should come down and check out the kung fu school in Dunkirk that he went to. That's how I heard about the school and I went to check it out. I was very impressed with what they were doing and that's when I began studying Kung Fu.

How long did you study with Master Willem Reeders?

I studied with him until he moved to Albuquerque in 1972. After studying for several months, I had to stop for one semester for academic reasons and then started taking lessons again. I had a bit of an advantage in that shortly after I returned to the school, I became roommates with Jim Corwin. Jim had just received his orange sash from Master Reeders and was a bit fanatical about training. We worked out quite a bit and I would essentially be getting private lessons on a daily basis. This allowed me to learn at a little faster pace than most of the other students. Master Reeders used to drive by the frat house and we would go to class and he would smile and tell us that he had driven by the house and seen us sparring or doing bag work. He loved that.

The school didn't exactly have a name. The sign outside the school said Karate / Kung Fu. I actually had possession of the sign after Master Reeders moved and I used it on my first school in Fredonia. We didn't have any patches on our uniforms and our diplomas did not designate any particular style. They were from the World Kung Fu Federation and had the diagram of the Kun Tao triangle with crossed tijous. The school didn't really advertise and picked up students by word of mouth.

What made you interested in karate?

I was a small kid and used to read books by Bruce Tegner and some of the early martial arts magazines. Then Bruce Lee came along in the Green Hornet. I never acted on it until the opportunity presented itself in college.

You started training with Master Reeders in 1968, what was it like meeting him?

When I went to the school the first time, I was greeted by Master Reeders' wife, who ran the business aspect of the school. I told her how I heard of the school and she invited me to stay and watch a class. Following this I signed up for classes and didn't actually meet Master Reeders until I started taking classes. He greeted me and then turned me over to a senior student who would be leading the class. He was soft spoken and polite. I was then integrated into the class and shown the proper protocols for starting and ending classes, etc. The senior student would then lead the workout. The workouts were pretty extensive and quite a bit of emphasis was placed on them. They consisted of stretching and strengthening exercises but always focused on proper stances, balance, extension, rooting and breathing. In addition, they would always include a series of Tai So breathing exercises. These were a type of dynamic tension, isometric exercises that focused heavily on deep abdominal breathing. For instance, you would do curls with one arm while resisting equally with the other and coordinating this with deep breathing. Following the workout there would be a ten to fifteen minutes break where all the students would sit around and Master Reeders would talk about kung fu and tell some personal stories. We would then start class.

What was the class structure like and how many times a week did you have class?

I began in the white/yellow sash class. There were two classes a week and a sparring class on Sundays. You paid your monthly dues and could attend as often as you wanted. As you progressed to green and gray sash classes you would also be allowed to attend lower classes to help teach. I took advantage of this when I could. The sash system was fairly basic: white, yellow, green, gray (brown) and orange (black). I should also mention that the orange sashes were actually a

bright red color. This was true of both our school in Dunkirk and when Master Reeder was teaching Bob Servidio and the other early students. This was different from Art Sykes' students whose sashes were actually orange. I am not sure why that is but Art Sykes was certainly aware that we used red. Both Master Reeder's and Master Sykes' "red" sashes, were actually a deeper shade of red with gold tassels.

Did you actually have sashes or were they more like karate belts?

We had sashes. A proper sash was about sixteen feet long and took two people to put on. The sash is wound tightly around the abdomen and serves to help keep those muscles tensed. Master Reeder's sash was made of silk, which is incredibly strong. Chinese armor used to incorporate silk because of its' ability to resist weapons.

Did you wear the sashes to class?

No, we would only wear them for tournaments or during demonstrations. During class we all wore the same uniform, loose fitting black pants that help hide stance movements and a black t-shirt to avoid techniques that grabbed the sleeves of karate type gis. This uniform was unique to the kung fu that Master Reeder taught.

What were classes like?

Well, class started with a thirty minute workout followed by a short break. Classes lasted an additional hour to hour and a half and would vary in terms of what we focused on. In some classes we would spend time reviewing forms that we already knew or were learning. Master Reeder put a great deal of emphasis on technique work so we would pair off and learn and practice techniques or we may do bag work or sparring or a combination of them. On Sundays there were three classes. One was a sparring class that anyone could attend. One was an orange sash class and gray sashes were allowed to attend. The third was a conditioning class where we would do an assortment of conditioning exercises

such as repetitive blocking and striking drills or sweeping drills with contact and various strengthening exercises, isometric exercises and bag work. We never used pads for the conditioning exercises or sparring. These classes were ended with a fifteen-minute meditation session which basically focused on relaxing and how to focus the mind on goals and intent.

What sort of stories would Master Reeders tell during your breaks?

He would relate stories from his childhood, such as how he would learn a new technique and then go out and try it. He laughed and said he got beat up many times but kept practicing until the technique worked. He would talk about learning from his great uncle, Leong Seong. One story centered around how Master Reeders was doing technique work with his uncle and decided to foot sweep him. He described successfully sweeping his uncle's front leg and then waking up to see his uncle staring down at him saying "I have two legs". Another story had to do with an incident that took place when he was sixteen years old. An older martial artist in his village was saying derogatory things about his uncle so he told his uncle about it said he wanted to confront the man. His uncle told him to forget about it, the man's weapons were the hatchets and if Master Reeders made a mistake he could be killed. Master Reeders said he could not stop thinking about it and confronted the old man, who told him to "go home and be born". I guess this meant that he was too young and in response Master Reeders slapped him in the face. When the old man reached for his hatchets Master Reeders struck him on the back of his hands with his tijous, causing him to drop both weapons. He then struck him several more times with them, ending the fight.

Could you speak a little about Kun Tao?

There are numerous systems of Kun Tao in Indonesia, Master Reeders' Kun Tao is unique to his family. Kun Tao is generally passed only from father to son but Master Reeders learned from his great uncle, Leong Seong, who had no other heir to pass it on to. On occasion we would be doing a kung fu technique in class and Master Reeders would stop and say "this is how we do it in Kun Tao" and he

would demonstrate a variation of the technique. The technique would be similar but somehow faster and deadlier. It always amazed us and we would ask him to show it again and he would chuckle and say “no, no, no, that’s Kun Tao”. Kun Tao is more than a martial art, it is a belief system with a spiritual aspect to it.

Could you tell me about the various forms in the system?

The first three forms: Block, Strike and Heinan, are all forms designed to teach basic techniques in how to stand, move, turn, block, strike, kick and breathe (among other things). These three forms comprise the foundation of the art and if the fundamentals are not done properly, then nothing coming after them will be correct. New students don’t immediately start learning forms. They learn the individual stances, blocks and strikes and then practice them with technique work. Once the student knows the basic blocks and strikes and has practiced using them then they learn the forms to give them a logical and consistent way to practice. This is the same for all forms. Rather than learning the form and then breaking it down to techniques, the student should learn the technique, or a variation of it, and then incorporate them into the system via the established forms.

Were there different forms that were required for different sash levels?

Although there was no specific set of requirements, advancement tended to adhere to certain guidelines. To advance to yellow sash, students would have to show proficiency in the block, strike, Heinan forms as well as basic understanding of the Saolin form. However, in addition to the forms, students were judged on other aspects of training such as sparring, bag work and the numerous kicks and other techniques that never appear in the forms.

Advancement to green sash required perfecting the basic forms, continuing to work Saolin, which introduced the student to low, solid stances, facing opponents in numerous angles of attack, and techniques that introduce multiple strikes and high / low attacking techniques.

In addition, students would learn lateral movement and simultaneous blocking and striking techniques which are characterized in the Lion Technique and Four Point forms as well as learning how to control your opponent's hands. They would also be exposed to techniques found in Hak Chan, characterized by fast evasive techniques and multiple open-handed offensive techniques. Advancement in all additional aspects of training were evaluated as well.

Progressing to gray (brown) and orange (black) followed the same general principles. Students would continue learning Hak Chan techniques and ultimately would learn the entire form. In addition, they would be introduced into the techniques from the Kwitang form. This form derived from the Kwitang Silat system which came from an area called Kwitang near Djakarta. This system emphasized solid (ape) stances and techniques that were power oriented, such as forearm and elbow blocking and striking, specialized hand positioning and reinforced strikes. Progressing to orange sash required working Hak Chan until it could be completed in 18 seconds. Hak Chan is a very complicated form that incorporates numerous simultaneous blocking and striking techniques while constantly moving against multiple opponents from all directions. Reducing the time to 18 seconds required economizing technique by eliminating all unnecessary movement and over extension and being able to explode off your stance while changing directions. Master Reeders did this form in 13 seconds.

To put things in perspective, when I first started studying, Kwitang had just been introduced into the curriculum for the orange sashes. By the time I had reached the orange sash level, Kwitang had become a requirement and orange sashes were beginning to learn Ho Chan techniques and ultimately the form. This advanced form focused on explosive movement, sweeping kicks and softer energy. In addition to the empty hand forms, there were numerous weapon forms that students started learning as green sashes. These included the staff, tijous (sais), short sword, and knife. Before Master Reeders left for Albuquerque he had also begun teaching us tai chi concepts, principles and some of the techniques. He always said that tai chi was a "high" style because it did not rely on physical strength.

What were the most important aspects of training?

There were many different aspects of training which included forms, technique work, sparring, bag work, physical and mental conditioning, etc. Each had their own function. Form work gave us a consistent way to practice the techniques of the different systems represented by the forms. Technique work would give us a controlled way to practice those techniques against an opponent. Sparring was a somewhat less controlled way to practice techniques and develop reflexes. It was limited however in that you could not use many of the techniques within the system such as open hand strikes, groin strikes and low kicks to avoid injuring your opponent. Bag work is necessary to know how to control distance and maximize power in strikes and kicks. Physical conditioning helped develop speed, strength and balance and mental conditioning helped put all of these different aspects together so that there is a gestalt where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

What would you say is the best way to train?

What I would say is that every aspect of training is important and needs the students' full attention. When doing the workout, the student should recognize that there is something to be learned from every exercise other than just the calisthenics. There is proper technique, stance, centering, focus, balance and breathing. The exercises should not be done mindlessly or to "get them over with". The student should always ask himself what he wants to get out of the training.

For instance, in the forms and exercises there is a correct place for everything. Hands are never just hanging around. They are always being part of the defensive system and protecting the vulnerable targets. If an opponent knocks your high hand down your low hand should automatically replace it. This is what lion movement is all about. When we think about blocking, we should not be thinking of blocking a strike or a kick. We should be thinking of blocking the target. This way I only have to protect the space that I take up which can basically be divided into four quadrants, two high and two low. If I can control this space as I move and turn then I can protect myself. If I am thinking about blocking strikes and

kicks, then I'm going to be going after them and opening myself up to over extension.

Breathing is another important aspect of kung fu. Proper breathing is necessary for controlling and directing internal energy and should be integrated into all aspects of training. Master Reeders put a lot of emphasis on Tai So to teach us this. In addition to the Tai So exercises, we would sometimes do the forms with an emphasis on dynamic tension and Tai So breathing.

I mentioned before that Master Reeders considered tai chi to be very important. He had started to teach us the concepts and principals involved in tai chi before he moved and although I did not have the opportunity to learn the tai chi form that he knew, I was able to incorporate those principles into the kung fu forms. Working the forms and incorporating the tai chi principles of soft, smooth, sunken, circular and slow, have proven to be a valuable method for me. It is very important to maintain the mind / body connection.

Have you ever had to use your Kung Fu?

Well, this is nothing I am proud of but there were a few situations I was involved in while learning Kung Fu. Fredonia was a typical college town and when you went downtown there was always friction between college students and "townies". Combine this with drinking (at that time the legal age for drinking was 18) and it wasn't hard to find trouble. Most of the guys I studied with went through a period where we would not be sure that what we had been learning would actually work in real situations. So, I ended up being involved in a few fights, which were quite educational. I remember the first incident very clearly. It was over a girl and I didn't start the trouble but did not avoid it either. This guy threw a punch at me and I blocked it and stepped in and hit him about four times and when I stepped back, he hit me. I realized immediately that I had been sparring. I learned the difference between sparring and fighting and after that I approached each strike and kick as if I were doing bag work. There were a couple of subsequent incidents in which there was no question that the kung fu worked and there was no further doubt or need to prove anything.

Is it true that Master Willem Reeders taught different things to different people at different times?

Yes, that's true. His first students were a small group from Erie, Pennsylvania which included Bob Servidio, Art Sykes, Ed (Tiny) Seeley, Artis Simmons and Ray Cunningham. They had been studying Shotokan Karate and Judo. At this time Bob Servidio heard about Master Reeders, who was teaching Judo at the Jamestown, N.Y., YMCA. He went and met Master Reeders and invited him to come to Erie to work out. After learning of the true nature of Master Reeders' martial arts training they began studying from him. He focused a great deal on technique work but also taught some short forms (4 point, 6 point, 8 point). I believe these short forms are called "jurus", which are common to Indonesian arts, but I never actually heard anyone call them that. He also taught fighting with weapons such as the tijous, staff and knife. In 1964 a conflict arose between Master Reeders and one of the students and he quit as President of the school. Master Reeders' top student, Bob Servidio, then began teaching the art and is currently located in Meadville, Pennsylvania. Master Reeders began teaching Shotokan Karate and Judo in Jamestown and also continued teaching kung fu to some of his early students. He then moved to Dunkirk and began teaching Liu Seong Royal Kung Fu and Poekoelan.

When did you meet Art Sykes?

He visited several times during the period that I was studying. He was living and teaching in Las Vegas. The first time would have been in 1969, he would come to the school and join us in class. I remember him coming to Dunkirk in early 1970 when Master Reeders turned 54. There was a large celebration of his 50th anniversary in kung fu and several schools from Toronto had come. There was lion dancing and demonstrations and there was also a tournament. (I remember Paul Tjan, who was the Chairman of the World Kung Fu Federation, coming up to us and telling us how lucky we were to have Master Reeders as our teacher). Jim Corwin demonstrated Kwitang and it was the first time that Art Sykes had ever seen it. He came over to the frat house after that and was having Jim show him some of the techniques. I ran into him from time to time at tournaments after

that and the last time I saw him was at a workshop he put on in Erie Pennsylvania in the early 1990s. He had students who taught in Erie, Cleveland and Toronto

The kung fu that Art Sykes did was very similar to what we did. He would do a technique and we would say “we have that technique in hak chan”. Or we would do a form he didn’t know but would be familiar with the techniques within it. The strange thing is that the kung fu his students did was quite different from what we did. I knew and competed against several of Master Sykes’ students, including Sam Copeland, Tom Pepperman, and Cam Balmer. They were very good but their kung fu was not the same as ours. Several years later I met and became friends with Joe Salamone, another one of Master Sykes' senior students. Joe is incredibly skilled but his kung fu is different from ours. In addition to the Royal Kung Fu and Kun Tao that he learned from his great uncle, Leong Seong, Master Reeder also had many other instructors and knew many different Silat systems. I know that Master Sykes also studied with Willie Wetzel, a well know Poekoelan Silat instructor.

Silat is a generic term for numerous martial art systems in Indonesia. Master Reeder also taught a Poekoelan Silat class in Dunkirk and when he moved to Albuquerque he stopped teaching Kung Fu completely and only taught Poekoelan and Tai Chi.

Is it true that Master Reeder taught Bruce Lee?

Yes, that is true. On several occasions Master Reeder showed us letters that he received from Bruce Lee. They were in Chinese so we don’t know what they said but Master Reeder acknowledged that they were friends and that Bruce Lee was a student. I attended a workshop with Dan Inosanto, one of Bruce Lee’s top students. He did a presentation about the history of his system and he had several documents confirming that Bruce Lee had learned Indonesian systems from Master Reeder. There was also an article in “Full Contact” magazine which clarifies this issue with information from both Dan Inosanto and Victor deThouars. The deThouars brothers are very well known and teach several different styles of Silat. They studied with some of the same instructors that Master Reeder had. I will send you a copy of that part of the interview.

What was Master Reeders like as a person?

He was an interesting guy. Physically he was about 5'6" tall and 150 pounds. He wasn't physically intimidating until you saw him move or experienced his power. He could move and change direction very quickly. He was friendly and spoke English fairly well. In class he would walk around and make corrections or call whoever was leading the class over and tell them what corrections needed to be made. Jim Corwin and I would occasionally go to his house to visit and he would show us scrapbooks from his younger days and we would try to get him to talk and tell stories about his experiences and different instructors. One day we showed up unannounced and Master Reeders was sitting in an easy chair that had armrests. There was a stiff steel brush on the arm chair and he was rapping his fingers repeatedly into the brush. He explained that he was keeping the nerve endings in his fingers dead for open hand finger strikes. He also had custom made equipment for developing hand strength. This is a little off topic, but I remember having Master Reeders' oldest son, Willy, in the white belt class I was teaching. We were doing the exercises and I noticed that Willy had his toes curled under in the horse stance. I started to correct him and Master Reeders called me over and tells me that Willy was doing Kun Tao. It was like he was doing finger tip pushups with his toes. This was to strengthen the joints of the toes just like we do the fingers for open hand strikes, because some of the kicks in Kun Tao are done with the toes like finger strikes.

In addition to his prowess in Kung Fu, Master Reeders was also a pretty diverse and intelligent person. He was fluent in several languages, had a civil engineering degree, was a good soccer player, raced motorcycles in Holland and had participated in three different wars. This included a stint in a Japanese prisoner of war camp in Burma. In fact, there is a story that was published in an adventure magazine which was titled "The Rampage of the Red Ant", which was about some of his exploits during the war.

In 1971, Master Reeders' sister flew over from Holland to present Master Reeders with his family Coat of Arms and a royal title. While she was here, we had a celebration and she told stories about growing up in Indonesia and how she would have to clean and repair Master Reeders' clothes every day after he would

be out getting in fights. She had a few funny stories she shared with us that pretty much confirmed what Master Reeders had told us.

The thing that Master Reeders loved more than anything was hunting. He had hunted all over the world and cherished his gun collection and loved showing it off. There was a small group of people who hunted with him who talk about his skill hunting the same way his kung fu students talk about his martial skill.

What did you do after Master Reeders closed his school?

Everyone had expected Jerry Bradigan, who was Master Reeders' top student, to take over the school, but he had no interest in doing so. There were still students who wanted to continue training, including some of Master Reeders' private students. I had been helping Master Reeders teach for some time and was interested in continuing to teach so I wrote him and asked for permission to open a school. I was given permission by him and the Federation to start teaching and shortly after that Tom Ronan (another of Master Reeders' orange sash students) and I opened a school in Fredonia. We had been operating for several months when I received a job offer in Syracuse that I had been trying to get for some time. Tom wasn't interested in continuing on his own so we closed the school and I moved to Syracuse.

Dave Dolbear and I had been friends growing up in North Syracuse and he had a room for rent near Syracuse University. I moved in and Dave became my first student in Syracuse. The second one was Dan Donzella, who worked with Dave. In 1973 I approached CNY Judo and Karate schools and asked if I could join their school and teach kung fu. I was required to go into the karate school, which was run by Pete Mussachio, lead a workout and conduct a class with his students. He was satisfied with the authenticity of the style and agreed to let me start teaching out of his dojo in Eastwood. In the mid 1970s, Master Frank Van Lenten, 10th degree black belt, took over the Karate school, teaching Goju Karate. After taking over the school, Master Van Lenten decided he wanted to keep it strictly Karate and at that point the Judo club and I opened our own school. In 1978 I closed the school and moved to Florida.

What other training and experience have you had in martial arts?

While teaching at CNY I learned that Goju Karate was developed by Chojun Miagi, who had mastered a hard, Okinawan style and then went to China for many years where he studied Pa Kua Chang. This translates to “8 trigram palm” and has roots in the 8 trigrams of the I Ching. Pa Kua is one of three Chinese Internal martial arts, characterized by soft, circular motion and use of the palm and open-handed strikes. Master Van Lenten, who studied Miagi’s GoJu in Okinawa for thirteen years, agreed to teach me the Pa Kua and I became the first person he taught this aspect of his art to. The particular style of Pa Kua that Master Van Lenten taught was called “circling dragon” and interestingly the postures within the form are very similar to techniques found throughout the Liu Seong system. Including simultaneous blocking and striking, in close techniques, and extensive use of the palm. He was somewhat disappointed that his karate students had not found any value in the soft aspect of his art and had rejected learning it. After moving to Miami, I taught kung fu to a small group until I moved to Gainesville in 1981.

Jim Corwin lived in Gainesville so we immediately began training together and within a year we had opened a small school. It was also during this time that I started learning taiji from Dave Dolbear. After I moved to Florida, Dave found a practitioner, Leng Xinfu, who agreed to teach him Northern Wu Taiji. I then began visiting Dave in New York and he started teaching me the form. That was 37 years ago and I am still learning from Dave. Currently I am working on the “ancient” form. In addition, I studied Northern Shaolin Kung Fu from Dr. Joseph Wong and Tai Chi from his wife, Master Jiabo Yuan, from 1987 to 1992. Master Yuan taught the government forms including “24 Posture”, “48 Posture” and “Tai Chi Sword”.

Let me say that learning and practicing taiji has been a major influence on the progression of my kung fu. The underlying principles of both arts are compatible and taiji is imperative for developing mind / body coordination.

In addition, I have attended countless workshops and seminars from some very skilled martial artists including several of Dave’s instructors such as Liu Changiang, Zhu Xilin, Xu Gongwei and Jou Tsung Hwa. I have also attended seminars with Yang Jwing Ming, Danny Inosanto, Art Sykes, Joe Salomone and others.

Could you say something about keeping the Liu Seong tradition alive and how you feel it should be done in the future?

Let me begin by saying that I have been very fortunate to have been in the right place at the right time to meet and learn from some very skilled martial artists. Of course, I am a bit prejudiced, but in the 50 years that I have been practicing and teaching martial arts, I have found very few as diverse or effective as the system taught by Master Reeder. For example, the Kwitang Silat system is characterized by power and strength oriented techniques, while Hak Chan is characterized by fast, evasive, multiple blocking and striking techniques. This allows the student to choose those techniques within each style that “work” for them. A student with a smaller stature will be more likely to utilize fast, open handed techniques where a larger, stronger student may be more comfortable with the power techniques. The beauty of the system is that it incorporates a wide variety of technique for the students to choose for their own personal arsenal.

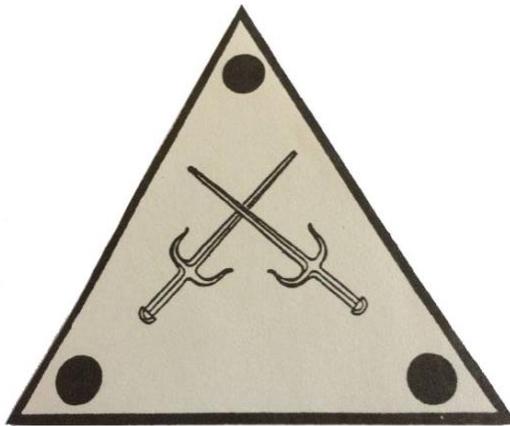
The truth is that my real learning began after I earned my orange sash. This gave me the foundation of the art and teaching under Master Reeder’s guidance gave me a much clearer understanding of it. There is a huge difference between earning an orange sash and having the skills and understanding to teach the art. Every individual student has different physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses. A good instructor must be able to identify those aspects in a student and gear the instruction to accommodate them. No two students learn in exactly the same way and the instructor must be able to accommodate his teaching. I have always attempted to keep the system as true as possible to how I learned it and that is how I teach it. While I have not made changes to the forms themselves, my understanding of them over years of practice has certainly given me insights that I did not have 50 years ago.

There are very few of Master Reeder’s students who are currently teaching Liu Seong kung fu. Besides myself, there is Jerry Bradigan, who I believe still teaches in Dunkirk. There is Bob Servidio in Meadville, Pa., who teaches what Master Reeder taught him in the early days. If there are others out there actively teaching authentic Liu Seong Kung Fu, I am not aware of them.

I know that Master Sykes, Bob Servidio and Jerry Bradigan have students that they have authorized to teach. As for me, having a second degree orange sash has

limited me to only promoting students to first degree orange sash. Dave Dolbear is the only orange sash student I have that sought permission from me to teach and who has made an arrangement to have me assess and sign off on any student that he believes should be promoted to orange sash. George Reyngoudt, another of my private orange sash students, who was a skilled martial artist and operated his own dojo when we met, is also conscientious about maintaining the integrity of the art. I know there are others out there, including some of my own students, that claim to teach Liu Seong Kung Fu. In some cases, they have remained true to the art and others have incorporated parts of the Liu Seong system into other martial arts that they teach. To my way of thinking, if you don't teach the system as a whole, then it should not be called Liu Seong Kung Fu.

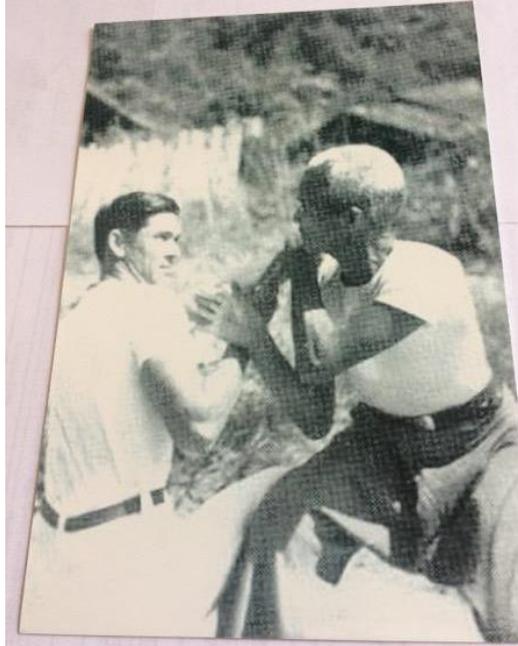




1) Symbol from our diplomas. Triangle with three dots (representing Kun Tao) with the crossed tijous.



2) Master Willem Reeders as young man. Note Kun Tao symbol on gi



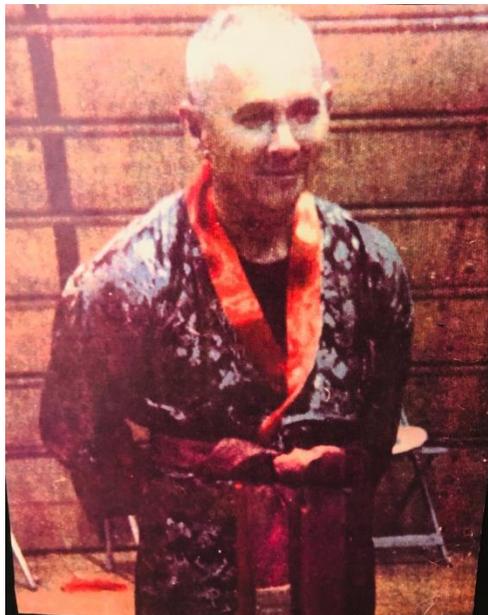
3) My understanding is that this is Master Reeders with his great uncle, Leong Seong.



4) This is a photo of Master Reeders doing technique work in early 1960s.



5) Photo from newspaper when Master Reiders' sister came to visit and present Reiders with the Family Coat of Arms.



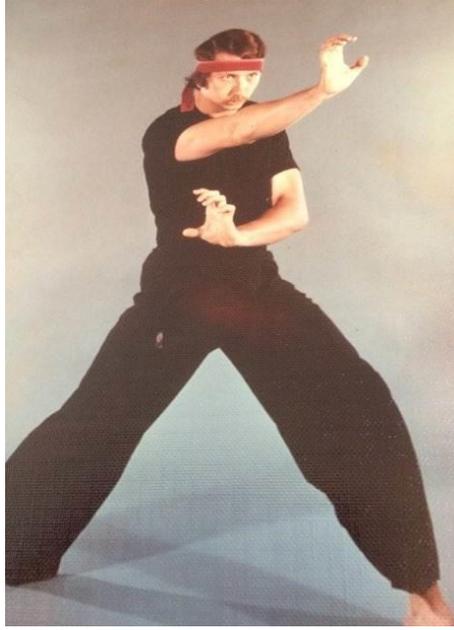
6) One of last photos taken of Master Reiders wearing a silk uniform and his red sash.



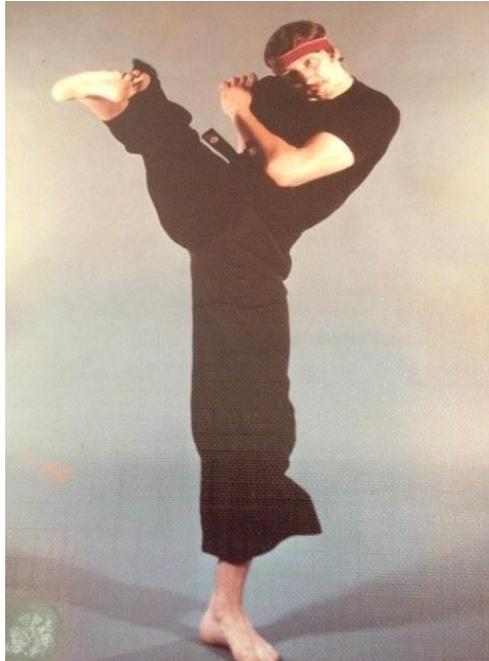
7) Photo of Jim Corwin (left) and me working out in 1972.



8) Photo of my first school in Fredonia. Sign is from Master Readers' school.



9) Photo taken in Syracuse 1975.



10) “



11) Photo of Syracuse Martial Arts instructors – 1977. Bottom row (Galvin, Greg Tearney, Steve Kravik). Top row (Vince Grace, Lee Thompson, Master Frank Van Lenten)



12) Dan Donzella, myself and Dave Dolbear, my first two orange sash students.



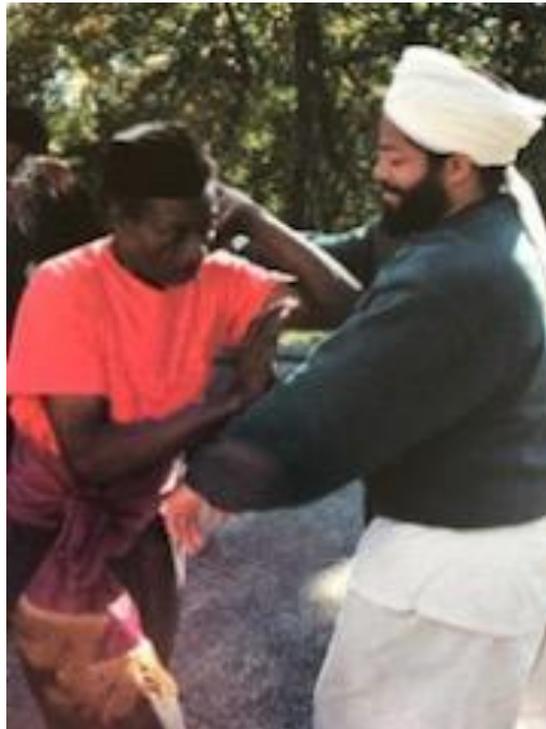
13) Me teaching my son – 1988



14) Photos when Reeder's returned from Albuquerque for a visit. (Scott Young, Bob Servidio, Master Reeder's. Scott Young is Bob Servideo's top student).



15) Photo when Reeders returned from Albuquerque for reunion. (Mitzi Bradigan, Jerry Bradigan, Master Reeders and his wife Marilyn)



16) Art Sykes (left) training with partner



17) Joe Salomone and George Reyngoudt



18) Master Reeders after he moved to Albuquerque

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Greg Walker, the Executive Director of Full Contact Magazine, which appeared in the April 1994 issue.

Full Contact: What has been the most satisfying discovery you've made in seeing Full Contact Magazine launched?

Greg Walker: There are, and will be, many. But, one in particular stands out in my mind. There is a long running debate as to whether Bruce Lee studied/practiced the arts of Silat and Kali. Even recently I've read where one individual offers, "It's no secret Bruce Lee never studied Kali or Silat," although the writer failed to provide any information that would support his statement.

In meeting with Maha Guru Victor de Thouars last year, I enjoyed several long conversations regarding this specific issue. Victor states for the record that Lee was indeed introduced to Silat via Willem Reeders, who was both a Kun Tao and Silat player whose descendent branch is from Nes DeVries, Leo Sjel, Lion de Riearere, Theo Schrijn, Puk and Mancho Soverbier, Madrais, Tji Petjut, Abu Saman, and Suro Djawan.

When Lee was exploring Kun Tao he was directed to Bill Reeders. As their association became stronger, Reeders introduced Mr. Lee to Silat as well as Kun Tao. The two are reported by Victor to have exchanged numerous letters on both subjects, which remain today in the Reeders' estate. It was because of Willem Reeders that Lee became aware of the possibilities Silat offered for the continued evolution of Lee's Jeet Kune Do, and Bruce directed Dan Inosanto to further investigate both Silat and Kali as this was Dan's role.

Now, both Victor and Dan Inosanto can support this as fact and indeed have, although Bill Reeders' affiliation with Bruce Lee has been the missing link known to but a small circle until now. But, such a "discovery" is only another piece of the always intriguing puzzle surrounding Bruce Lee.

