

Con U masters the martial Arts

by Paul Graif

Kung Fu. Karate. Tae Kwon Do. and Tai Chi. What do they all mean?

If you want to know the difference between these forms of martial arts, then check out the department of Fitness and Recreation at Concordia.

To the seasoned professional, like Concordia's Lorne Bernard,

it is an intensely studied art that is more of a discipline than a self defense course.

Bernard has been teaching White Crane Kung Fu at Concordia for two years. It was first brought to Concordia, and Canada, by Mr. Ngu from Malaysia in 1982.

Bernard learned this rare type of Kung Fu under the direction of Ngu, studying it since 1983.

In 1988 he decided to become a full time instructor.

He went to Malaysia in 1988 to study for four months under an 86-year-old Grand Master, becoming only the second White Crane Master in Canada after Ngu.

Fu Kien White Crane, its full name, is a type of Kung Fu that is based on the movements of the White Crane. The style involves evasive foot movements. There are also 18 different weapons that one must learn to use to master the discipline.

In Malaysia, Bernard trained twice a day, seven days a week while living in the martial arts school with his master. Most of his training was done early in the morning as a result of the intense heat.

"It was so hot, that people would walk around with umbrellas, and even ride their bikes with them to protect them from the sun," said Bernard.

Bernard found life in Malaysia to be drastically different from our own in North America.

"They live life at a slower pace, they take it easy. They have a lot of

religious things going on that we aren't even aware goes on," said Bernard.

The cost of living was quite cheap.

"I was able to get a meal for around fifty cents," said Bernard.

Bernard was the main attraction in the small town of Borneo when he participated in public exhibitions, as he was the only foreigner.

"They were very friendly to me, they were happy to see a non-Chinese person doing martial arts."

After returning to Montreal, he started his own martial arts school. He wanted to give something back to Concordia, so he now offers two classes a week to Concordia students at his downtown school, at a cost of twenty-five dollars.

Bernard recently invited Lee Jao Chian, the son of his Grand Master in Malaysia, to Montreal to promote White Crane Kung Fu. Chian is a fifth generation Master ranked number one in the world in White Crane.

It takes a lifetime of study to master White Crane, and by way of comparison, Bernard only knows how to use seven of the weapons and has mastered but one.

White Crane is a mixture of hard and soft styles of martial arts. Hard being a form where one attempts to overpower one's opponent, such as Karate, and soft such as Tai Chi where one seeks to evade one's attacker.

"You can study it (White Crane) all of your life and still not learn it all," said Bernard.