

Kung fu school kicks open its doors to public

Classes, demonstrations to show 3 styles of Chinese martial arts and kickboxing

ALEX ROSLIN

SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

One of Quebec's largest Chinese kung fu schools is welcoming the public to an open house this weekend.

Today, the Académie Shaolin

White Crane Kung Fu is holding a series of classes and demonstrations of three styles of traditional Chinese martial arts and kickboxing.

Tomorrow afternoon, the academy offers a seminar on a celebrated style of kung fu called

Bak Sing Choy Lay Fut given by Toronto kung fu master Chiu Kwok-Chung.

The open house takes place in the school's new facilities near Old Montreal. (The school had to leave its long-time location on Bleury St. because the building was slated for demolition to make way for the Montreal Symphony Orchestra's planned new concert hall.)

Head instructor Lorne Bernard says he hopes the new school will help preserve and pass on knowledge of China's ancient fighting systems.

"These are not sport-oriented styles," he said. "They are authentic self-defence systems passed down from generation to generation.

"Until recently, they were closed-door systems open only to

members of the teacher's family," said Bernard, who is also president of the 45-member Eastern Canada Chinese Martial Arts Federation.

The open-house events take place today from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tomorrow, the three-hour seminar starts at 2 p.m. and costs \$60. (Some martial-arts experience is recommended.)

It all takes place at 643 Notre

Dame St. W., third floor (métro Square Victoria). For more information, call (514) 843-5177.

Bernard's federation is far from the only martial-arts association in town.

Others present in Montreal include the Association Karaté Québec, (514) 252-3161; Judo Québec, (514) 252-3040; and the Fédération Québécoise de Taekwondo, (514) 252-3198.