



Drunken Master III

*** (Audio: C+, Video: B-)

Andy Lau, Michele Reis, Simon Yam. Directed by Lau Kar Leung. Released by CAV Distribution. Hong Kong (Cantonese/Mandarin). 90 minutes. Not rated. No extra features.

The title notwithstanding, "Drunken Master III" does not star Jackie Chan. It does, however, continue the story of turn-of-the-century hero Wong Fei Hong and his efforts to keep Canton and China at peace and free of foreign intervention and internal corruption. The only continuity with the previous Jackie Chan hit, "Drunken Master II" is that this film was directed by Lau Kar Leung, the same legend who directed and co-starred in the Chan film.

This is a prequel of sorts to the Chan film, with Wong's father's marriage to his stepmother providing one of the key subplots in a convoluted but engaging story involving revolutionaries, the Lotus cult, the stubborn Ching dynasty, Sun Yat-Sen, Chinese republicans and a missing Jade ring. Making sense of it all is pointless for anyone who's seen this type of historical fodder from Hong Kong before -- it turns out well in the end.

Worth noting is that this is probably the best transfer yet of a film from the World Video library through CAV. The picture quality is quite solid, well-mastered from good quality source prints. **-By Wade Major**

Drunken Master III

World Video and Supply // Unrated // \$24.95 // July 9, 2001

REVIEW

Review by [Gil Jawetz](#) | posted August 14, 2001

THE STRAIGHT DOPE:

Jackie Chan's *Drunken Master II* helped cement his position as one of the world's top action-comedy stars. Unfortunately, the optimistically titled *Drunken Master III* (1994) has no discernible relation to Jackie or *Drunken Master II*. It doesn't really feature the drunken fighting style that was that film's trademark. There's a lot of wine and ample use of drunk fist kung fu, a subtle variation on other kung fu styles, but Jackie was smart enough to know that, in order to make a visual impact, drunk style meant taking it to the next level. (First get sloppy drunk, preferably by pouring a jug of booze over your head. Then, start flailing around like a madman, conquering your opponents as if by chance.) The fighters in *Drunken Master III* all fight extremely well, and they do mix humor in with the parrying, but nobody here aims for Jackie's brand of lunacy.

Actually, given the costumes, period, and semi-political bent of the film, it seems to take *Peking Opera Blues* as a model more than the *Drunken Master* films, which is fine. The plot is a convoluted mix of royalty and revolution, with statements on foreigners and cults thrown in for good measure. While the story may be something of a mess, and the finale typically abrupt, the film is fun to watch, with a huge cast of charismatic Hong Kong stars. One particularly unusual fight finds one of the heroes fending off a gay challenger on a primitive, slow moving bus. Eventually he tries to counter with what can only be called "gay fu." Hardly politically correct, but certainly something I've never seen before.

VIDEO: The widescreen video is ok, but far from great. A good deal of dirt and occasional video flaws mar the print, as does a general lack of sharpness and color. It could be worse, but it ain't great.

AUDIO: The audio is also weak. Soundtracks are available in 2.0 Mandarin and 2.0 Cantonese, with burned in Chinese and English subtitles. Most of the sound is a bit muffled, although one track emphasizes treble while the other is more muted (don't ask me which is which).

EXTRAS: There are no extras.

FINAL THOUGHTS: While the title may have been a marketing ploy, *Drunken Master III* overcomes the inherent disappointment in it's not really being a *Drunken Master* film with wit, energy, and sense of fun. Gil Jawetz is a graphic designer, video director, and t-shirt designer.

ADVICE

Recommended

VIDEO

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MOVIE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

AUDIO

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

REPLAY

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

EXTRAS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★