



## The Green Dragon Inn

**\*\*1/2 (Audio: C-, Video: D+, Features: C+)**

*Yue Hwa Shang, Lo Lei, Kuan Ling Fung. Directed by Mo Mun-Hung. Produced by Sum Yau-Fong. Released by CAV Distribution. Hong Kong (English-dubbed). 94 minutes. Not rated. Trailer for "Heroes Among Heroes."*

One of the thousands of unheralded martial arts quickies produced in Hong Kong during the 1970s, "The Green Dragon Inn" was intended to in some small way capitalize on the success of King Hu's original "Dragon Gate Inn," one of the most popular martial arts dramas of the 1960s. As far as the plot is concerned, however, it has nothing to do with King Hu's earlier film and actually has an endearing spirit of its own, despite the formulaic conventions.

Basically, it's a standard-issue Ching Dynasty story converted to the Ming Dynasty, pitting an aging martial arts master against a government emissary who has wrongly arrested his son for murder. The set pieces date somewhat compared to more modern sequences, but there is some impressive choreography nonetheless. Some of the fighting actually has more merit from a real-life standpoint in that it reflects genuine martial artistry and not simply "for the screen" choreography.

Like many of the titles from the World collection, the quality here is spotty -- mastered from video elements which were themselves mastered from unspectacular film elements. That also means that it's full-frame and English-dubbed. Such shortcomings, however, are a small price to pay for the archival value of films, which in many cases no longer exist in their original form. "The Green Dragon Inn" is likely to be one of these, making any copy of the picture far more important than it might otherwise have been.

The disc also includes one fabulous extra -- a mind-blowing trailer for "Heroes Among Heroes," one of Hong Kong star Donnie Yen's more engaging performances and a virtual plethora of eye-popping action pieces. This trailer is especially invigorating, so good that it almost justifies buying the disc all by itself, although it's the same trailer included on several of World Video's classic Hong Kong martial arts films.

*-By Wade Major*