

Document Citation

Title	The valiant ones
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Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1974 Oct 16
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Chung lieh t'u (The valiant ones), Hu, King, 1974

The Valiant Ones

(HONG-KONG-COLOR)

Variety

10-16-74

Paris, Oct. 15.

King Hu release and production. Features entire cast. Written, directed, edited and art directed by King Hu. Camera (Eastmancolor), Chun Tsing-Chan. Reviewed at Studio 70, Paris, Oct. 5, '74. Running time, 110 MINS.

Yu Ta-Yu Ciao Hung
Chi-Yuan Pai Ying
Wife Hsu Feng
Captain Li Wen-Tai
Pirate Hau Ying-Chieh
Japanese Chu Yuen-Lung

Kung fu has become a familiar genre on Western film marts. This one has the martial arts mayhem and derring-do to a good measure, plus a more knowing historical perspective and sharply done editing, playing and direction. It puts it a good karate chop over many others cutting swathes in regular distrib worldwide and should find a good following, plus bucking up the genre a bit.

Director King Hu also has a good feel for telling locations and recreation of a violent 13th century China where a decadent Emperor is beset by cuthroat Japanese and Chinese priates preying on them. A stalwart officer is sent with some aides, as a dashing man and wife proficient in kung fu, and others.

The final meeting with the pirates leads to some almost lyrical sword and hand fights as many of the heroes die to win a victory that is a bit undercut by the corruption dynasty and the still growing bands of pirates. The wife and husband clashing with pirate champs during a visit to their camp and the last whirlwind fight give this plenty of action market legs as well as programmer status on a bit more talent, characterization and dash than usually pesent in these chop socky pix.

Made independently, away from the top Hong Kong purveyers, it marks King Hu a producer-director to watch and who might try other genres. —Mosk.