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| Hu, King (1931-1997) |
| Hu, Jinquan |
| King Hu (Hu Jinquan) was an influential Chinese film director based in Hong Kong who helped shape martial arts film and introduce Chinese-language cinema abroad. Born near Beijing, he attended the Beijing National Art Institute, but was caught in Hong Kong in 1949 with the advent of the Communist Revolution. Holding various jobs, including acting and art direction, Hu eventually became a film director in the early 1960s working for the Shaw Brothers, Hong Kong’s most prolific studio. Influenced by Peking opera and drawing on his artistic experience, Hu moved away from the simple emphasis on action in the *wuxia* or ‘chivalric martial hero’ genre, to focus on films like Dai zui xia [*Come Drink with Me*] (1966) on character centred narratives grounded in history and a philosophical outlook. He moved to Taiwan to make *Longmen Kezhan* [*The Dragon Gate Inn*] (1967) and *Xia nu* [*A Touch of Zen*] (1970), the latter of which became one of the first Chinese films to win an award at a European festival (a technical award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1975). *Xia nu* sustained *Longmen Kezhan’s* narrative of power struggles and the fate of China, but it also added a spiritual dimension rarely featured in similar films, while its fight choreography proved influential in martial arts cinema. |
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| Further reading:  (Bordwell, Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment)  (Bordwell, Richness Through Imperfection: King Hu and the Glimpse)  (Teo, Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Wuxia Tradition)  (Teo, King Hu's a Touch of Zen) |