

Malaysia's Chong Keat-aun wins best new director at Golden Horse Awards

FORMER radio presenter turned film director Chong Keat-aun won the Best New Director award for his debut feature, *The Story of Southern Islet* at the Golden Horse Awards in Taipei last Saturday.

Chong, who directed, wrote and acted in the film, was also nominated for Best Original Screenplay. However, he didn't win in the other category, reports *Focus Taiwan*.

"Movies are not great. It is the people who help make

them that are great," Chong said during his acceptance speech.

He revealed that many people helped him to make the film, but a cameraman and a mentor passed away after the film was completed. "I am forever grateful for their guidance and support."

When he was trying to secure funding for the film that explores the numerous spiritual beliefs in Malaysia, many people told him that they

didn't understand it. But he was hopeful that somebody would understand the film's message.

"I am happy that the Golden Horse Awards understood it," Chong said in the *Focus Taiwan* article.

The Story of Southern Islet is about a Chinese couple who live near the Malaysia-Thailand border. After a quarrel with a neighbour, the husband faints and spits up blood and a rusty nail.

Desperate to find treatment for her husband, the wife begins to explore the diverse spiritual beliefs among the different ethnic groups in the region, hoping that one of them can help heal her husband.

The film stars Season Chee, Pearly Chua, Jojo Goh, Mei-Sim Hoon and Ling Tang.



Chong with his award. – AFP

