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'The Road to Mandalay' wins FEDEORA Award for Best Film in Venice

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Taipei, Sept. 10 (CNA) "The Road to Mandalay" by Myanmar-born Taiwanese director Midi Z (趙德胤) won the FEDEORA Award for Best Film at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival on Friday.

The movie, which stars Taiwanese actors Kai Ko (柯震東) and Wu Ke-xi (吳可熙), is a story about two young Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand, who leave their home country for a better future.

The film's Sept. 5 world premiere at the festival drew an audience of more than 600 and won a round of applause that lasted three minutes upon its ending.

In a Facebook post after the award ceremony, Z expressed his appreciation to the jury for its recognition, saying that winning the award is very important to him as he is not formally trained in filmmaking.

"Such an encouragement has given me self-confidence, inspiring me to continue down the road of filmmaking," the 33-year-old director of Chinese descent said.

Z credited his achievements to his illiterate yet perseverant mother, who insisted on providing for his education.

"This was why I came to Taiwan and eventually became a film director," he said.

Z also mentioned his eldest sister, whom he said worked in Thailand to support his trip to Taiwan and is the original source of the storyline

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of "The Road to Mandalay."

"Without her, I would not have come to Taiwan or become a director, and neither would there be a movie called 'The Road to Mandalay.'"

Z, who was born in 1982 in Myanmar, moved to Taiwan for high school when he was 16 after winning a scholarship. He later went on to earn a bachelor's degree and master's degree in design at National Taiwan University of Science and Technology.

In 2011, he renounced his Myanmar citizenship and became a Taiwanese citizen, 13 years after he arrived in the country with US\$200 his family had scraped together for him. He had never seen a movie until he came to Taiwan, Z once said in an interview.

Z took the opportunity to express his gratitude to Taiwan for the support and education provided to him, describing his immigration to Taiwan as "a fateful arrangement just like winning a lottery."

"I'm a very lucky person. Thanks to Taiwan once again."

(By Sabine Cheng and Y.F. Low)

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