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BY KERRINE GOH
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6th Asian Film Awards nominees bared



Tsui Hark's *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* and Zhang Yimou's *The Flowers of War* lead the nominations at the 6th Asian Film Awards.

Three blockbusters from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong lead this year's competition for the **Asian Film Awards**, with the 3-D martial-arts movie *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* picking up seven nominations, including best film.

That was followed by Yimou's *Flowers...* and **Wei Te-sheng's** two-part, 4-1/2-hour epic, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*, with six nominations each, also including best film.

Postcard from Japan, *A Separation* from Iran, and India's *You Don't Get Life a Second Time* round out the list for best film.

Flying Swords picked up nods for veteran Hong Kong director Tsui Hark and best actor for **Chen Kun** for his dual role as a power-hungry eunuch and a look-alike treasure hunter. The movie also stars **Jet Li** as a Ming Dynasty-era general who battles imperial assassins at a remote outpost in the Chinese desert.

Chinese director Zhang Yimou was also nominated in the best-director category for *Flowers...*, which features Hollywood star **Christian Bale** as an American caught up in Japan's brutal occupation of Nanjing in 1937. With a price tag of nearly \$100 million, it's the most expensive Chinese film ever made.



Taiwan's **Wei Te-sheng** was

nominated for best director for *Warriors...*, an epic based on the true story of the island's Seediq tribes, who launched a bloody uprising in 1930 against Japanese rule.

Amid the blockbusters, several high-profile small-budget films were recognized, mainly in the acting categories. The two stars of the hit Taiwan coming-of-age comedy *You Are the Apple of My Eye* were nominated: **Michelle Chen** for best actress and **Ko Chen-tung** for best newcomer.

Deanie Ip and **Andy Lau** were nominated for best actress and best actor in *A Simple Life*, about an aging household servant and her master.

Actress **Eugene Domingo** and screenwriter **Chris Martinez** of the Philippines were nominated for *The Woman in the Septic Tank*, a satire on Asian art-house directors making films for Western audiences. The movie was hit in the local market last summer.

This year's nominations reveal that China "is a growing powerhouse in movies," said **Roger Garcia**, executive director of the **Hong Kong International Film Festival Society**, which organizes the awards.

The mix of historical epics and fantasy-action films highlight China's "ambition to make big movies," he said. "It's a sign of how Chinese-language cinema is trying to attract mass audiences."



In addition to best film, A

Separation received four other nominations, including two for **Asghar Farhadi** in the best director and best screenwriter categories. The film, about a woman seeking a divorce from her husband, has been one of the most acclaimed of the past year and took home the award for best foreign-language film at Sunday's **Golden Globe** awards. "This is a film that has resonated throughout the world, and the AFA is no exception," Mr. Garcia said. "It's a story that has universal appeal."

This year's **AFA** will be presented on March 19 at a ceremony in Hong Kong. The 12-member jury that will select the winners is headed by Singaporean director **Eric Khoo**, the first jury president who isn't part of the Hong Kong movie industry. Past presidents include actress **Michelle Yeoh**, actor **Tony Leung Ka-fai** and director **Yonfan**.

The full list of nominees:

Best Film

- *Nader and Simin, A Separation* (Iran)
- *Postcard* (Japan)
- *The Flowers of War* (Mainland China)

- *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate* (Hong Kong/Mainland China)
- *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale* (Taiwan)
- *You Don't Get Life a Second Time* (India)

Best Director

- Asghar Farhadi, *Nader and Simin, A Separation*
- Teddy Soeriaatmadja, *Lovely Man*
- Sono Sion, *Guilty of Romance*
- Tsui Hark, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*
- Wei Te-sheng, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*
- Zhang Yimou, *The Flowers of War*

Best Actor

- Chen Kun, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*
- Donny Damara, *Lovely Man*
- Andy Lau, *A Simple Life*
- Park Hae Il, *War of the Arrows*
- Yakusho Koji, *Chronicle of My Mother*

Best Actress

- Vidya Balan, *The Dirty Picture*

- Michelle Chen, *You Are the Apple of My Eye*
- Eugene Domingo, *The Woman in the Septic Tank*
- Leila Hatami, *Nader and Simin, A Separation*
- Deanie Ip, *A Simple Life*

Best Newcomer

- Ko Chen-tung, *You Are the Apple of My Eye*
- Eric Lin Hui-min, *Starry Starry Night*
- Maeda Ohshiro, *I Wish*
- Ni Ni, *The Flowers of War*
- Gita Novalista, *The Mirror Never Lies*

Best Supporting Actor

- Umin Boya, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*
- Lawrence Ko, *Jump! Ashin*
- Lee Je-hoon, *The Front Line*
- Mario Maurer, *The Outrage*

Best Supporting Actress

- Shamaine Buencamino, *Niño*

- Gwei Lun-mei, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*
- Cris Horwang, *Headshot*
- Mitsushima Hikari, *Hara-Kiri: Death of a Samurai*
- Yan Ni, *11 Flowers*

Best Screenwriter

- Asghar Farhadi, *Nader and Simin, A Separation*
- Shindô Kaneto, *Postcard*
- Liu Heng, Yan Geling, *The Flowers of War*
- Alan Mak, Felix Chong, *Overheard 2*
- Chris Martinez, *The Woman in the Septic Tank*

Best Cinematographer

- Chin Ting-chang, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*
- Vishvajith Karunarathna, *Flying Fish*
- Kim Woo-hyung, *The Front Line*
- Jake Pollock, Lai Yiu-fai (HKSC), *Wu Xia*
- Rahmat Syaiful, *The Mirror Never Lies*

Best Production Designer

- Suzanne Caplan Merwanji, *You Don't Get Life a Second Time*

- Ryu Seong-hee, *The Front Line*
- Taneda Yohei, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*
- Yee Chung-man, Ben Lau, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*
- Yee Chung-man, Sun Li, *Wu Xia*

Best Composer

- Chan Kwong-wing, Peter Kam, Chatchai Pongprapaphan, *Wu Xia*
- Chen Qigang, *The Flowers of War*
- Ricky Ho, *Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale*
- Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, A.R. Rahman, Neeraj Shridhar, *Rockstar*
- Sakamoto Ryuichi, *Hara-Kiri: Death of a Samurai*

Best Editor

- Curran Pang, *Overheard 2*
- Nelly Quettier, *11 Flowers*
- Hayedeh Safiyari, *Nader and Simin, A Separation*
- Anand Subaya, *You Don't Get Life a Second Time*
- Tang Man-to, *White Vengeance*

Best Visual Effects

- Ritesh Aggarwal, *Ra. One*
- Kamiya Makoto, *Gantz*
- Wook Kim, Josh Cole, Frankie Chung, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*
- Xiao Yang, Chang Song, A Law, Li Ming-hsung, Li Jin-hui, *Starry Starry Night*
- Yung Kwok-yin, Andy Kang, *Wu Xia*

Best Costume Designer

- Amano Kyoko, Emura Kouichi, *Milocrorze: A Love Story*
- William Chang Suk-ping, *The Flowers of War*
- Mok Kwan-kit, Wong Ming-ha, *White Vengeance*
- Noppadol Techo, *The Outrage*
- Yee Chung-man, *Flying Swords of Dragon Gate*

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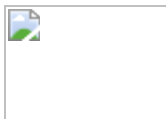


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