

EAST MEETS WEST

Richard Hogg, director at Ganapati Malta, says Asian slot developers are in hot demand this year as Western operators look to add unique and exciting content to their portfolios.

The sun always rises in the East, a fact that nicely illustrates a major shift taking place in the igaming industry right now. For years, Asian game developers have been in the shadows with operators preferring to take content from suppliers closer to home. But now their games are being brought into the light as operators in Western markets look to liven up their portfolios with unique and exciting slots from the region.

The meeting of East and West was apparent at ICE Totally Gaming, where Asian platform and content suppliers such as BBIN revealed plans to expand

believes that by using style cues from Manga and Anime it is possible to make slots instantly recognisable as being an Asia product, or in our case, Japanese. These cartoons have gone from niche interest to global phenomenon in a short space of time, allowing games designed in this style to resonate with fans all over the world – some already engaged with igaming, others new to playing online slots.

Asian culture offers an endless conveyor belt of themes, stories and characters around which to build games. From classics such as good versus evil, monks versus

the mentality, approach, and technology from the region. There is no point using Japanese design, for example, if the feel and flow of the game is the same as those being developed by Western suppliers. Slots must be developed and built to the highest possible standards or operators will simply refuse to integrate them into their portfolios.

The meeting of East and West provides huge opportunities for all stakeholders. For operators, it allows them to launch games that help them stand out from the crowd, slots that catch their players eyes, and immerse them in another world and culture. For Asian developers, having access to established European markets presents a huge opportunity to grow their business and put their games in front of new players the world over.

The online casino sector entered 2017 off the back of 12 months of phenomenal growth, but for that to continue throughout this year operators and suppliers will have to raise the bar further still. Eastern content is a great way of doing this, helping operators freshen up their slots offering and driving player acquisition, engagement and retention. It has been a long time coming, but East and West coming together makes for a powerful combination.

“Japanese technology can also be used to power the games to offer players a truly authentic experience”

their geographical reach into established Western markets. The timing is perfect; Eastern culture and technology are on trend right now, particularly when it comes to entertainment such as TV, film and music, as well as food and drink, and historical stories and characters.

Asian game developers are looking to capitalise on this intrigue and interest. They are seeking to celebrate and share their culture all around the world through slots and casino games, which we all know are hugely popular in Europe. But it is not just limited to the design and theme of slots games, Japanese technology can also be used to power the games to offer players a truly authentic experience.

When it comes to slot design, Ganapati

emperors, to beautiful geishas journeying through lands of blossom trees and gold dragons, developers have a lot to work with. But we also see an opportunity to showcase Japan’s innovative entertainment industry to the Western world via our slots games.

During ICE, for example, we inked a deal with Sony and AVEX to design, develop and deliver a game around the hit Japanese single Pen-Pineapple-Apple-Pen. The single was released by singer-songwriter PIKOTARO, and was produced by superstar comedian Daimaou Kosaka. It was uploaded to YouTube back in August 2016 and has amassed more than one billion views, and is being dubbed the next Gangman Style.

But to offer a truly Asian player experience, slots must also be built using



Richard Hogg is a director at Ganapati Malta. He is a gaming industry veteran whose career in the sector has spanned three decades and three continents. He launched a number of successful sportsbooks in Asia before developing the Superodds brand in the UK before acquiring Centrebet. He has also previously worked for Inside Gaming with Playtech before becoming a director at Ganapati Malta in 2016.