

Epic 'Art of War' Series to be Produced in Rare Chinese-Japanese-U.S. Collaboration

Written by Ginny Grimsley

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Michel Shane, executive producer of *Catch Me If You Can* and *I, Robot*, has forged an unusual collaborative alliance with the Chinese government, artists, investors, and Japan's Genco Inc. and Flamingo Features to produce an epic television series based on *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu.

Filming will commence July 14 in historical locations throughout China under the direction of Executive Producer Hu Mei (*Confucius*), one of that nation's leading filmmakers.

"This will be the first time *The Art of War* has ever been done in the West as a film or TV series, and it's unique in that the complete series is being shot in China," Shane says.

Adds Taro Maki, founder of Genco Inc., a Japanese studio best known for its anime productions: "Our full-fledged multinational collaboration stems from a mutual respect for Sun Tzu and his masterpiece. Here is an undefeated general whose lessons remain as important today as they were 2,500 years ago. We want to honor his story and share his wisdom."

Sun Tzu, considered the greatest military commander in history, penned *The Art of War* around 525 B.C. It is one of history's most enduring texts and today is required reading in the curricula of military, business, economic and political science classes around the globe.

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The series will cover the life of Sun Tzu, his contemporaries and their exploits, and explore the events that may have provided the foundation for lessons shared in *The Art of War*. Following the timeline of the final war between Wu and Ch'u, each episode will take the viewer farther across the battlefields of ancient China as Sun Tzu leads his outnumbered army to victory after victory. The life stories of Sun Tzu and those who influenced him will interspersed in the form of memories.

The Municipal People's Government in China has created a government board to oversee production matters, and each episode will be directed by various internationally acclaimed directors.

"This marks a new day," Maki says. "We're entering an era of true co-production, which holds tremendously exciting potential from many perspectives -- cultural, economic and political."

About Michel Shane: Michel Shane is a filmmaker, producer and co-founder of Hand Picked Films. He's best known as the executive producer of "Catch Me If You Can" and "I, Robot," along with his business partner Anthony Romano. One of motion pictures' premier independent producers, he specializes in financial structuring and feature film development. In recent years, he has worked with Steven Spielberg, Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks and Will Smith, among others.

About Tari Maki: Tari Maki is president of Genco, Inc., a Japanese anime production studio established in 1997 in Tokyo, Japan. Genco has produced more than 100 titles of animation TV series and films including *Sword Art Online*, *Elfen Lied* and *Tokyo Godfathers*.

From financing, studio booking to merchandising, Genco provides a wide range of production service for audiovisual projects.

About Flamingo Features: Flamingo Features has played a crucial financial and creative role in nearly 100 film, television and documentary projects throughout Asia. Flamingo Features manages content distribution rights for video on demand (VOD) and multi-media platforms to more than 70 million subscribers in Latin America and Japan. The company manages an active International Film Fund of nearly \$1 billion dollars.