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# Psychological Warfare during the American Occupation of Japan: The Documentary Film Project of Shu Taguchi and Bonner Fellers, 1949–1951

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## INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2013 the movie *Emperor* (Japanese title: *Shusen no Empera*), directed by Peter Webber, became a box office hit. The film was shown in 301 cinemas throughout Japan on July 27. According to a *Kogyo Tsushinsha* survey, it ranked fourth based on attendance and sales for July 27 (Saturday) and July 28 (Sunday): 157,964 people saw this movie and the sales figure was 183,166,700 yen (about \$1.83 million). By August 12, the film ranked eleventh based on the following figures: 878,106 had seen it at theaters in Japan since its release and the box office revenue totaled 991,120,500 yen (about \$9.91 million).<sup>1</sup> The film did far better in Japan than in the United States, where it opened in the spring. First released there on March 8, it grossed \$1,014,099 on the first weekend. It was shown in 260 theaters and ranked sixteenth in ticket sales revenue. By the time the movie ended its run on June 13, it had grossed \$3,346,265.<sup>2</sup>

This film is an entertaining historical fiction that mixes suspense and romance. The main character, Brig. Gen. Bonner Frank Fellers (Matthew Fox), was a real-life figure who served as Gen. Douglas MacArthur's military secretary and confidant. He was the key person in charge of

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MacArthur's psychological warfare against Japan during the Pacific War. The film opens with the dramatic explosion of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. In the next scene, General MacArthur (Tommy Lee Jones) and his men, on board the general's aircraft *Bataan*, are bound for Atsugi airfield near Yokohama on a historical mission to start the Allied Occupation of Japan. If Fellers, who died in 1973 at the age of seventy-seven, had been able to see the movie, perhaps he would have been pleased to see himself appearing in front of MacArthur inside *Bataan* for consultation. MacArthur's memoir had no mention of Fellers whatsoever, since it was edited (and perhaps written) by Fellers's arch rival, Courtney Whitney, who was in charge of the Government Section during the Occupation.<sup>3</sup> However, in the film Fellers appears much younger than a real-life brigadier general would be. Furthermore, Fellers in real life was married and a committed family man, whereas the film portrays him as single and in love with an exchange student from Japan whom he met during his college years. He searches for this fictional student, called Aya in the film, when he arrives in Japan and is ordered by MacArthur to investigate whether or not Emperor Hirohito was guilty of war crimes.

In actuality, Fellers from 1949 to 1951 was involved in a project to create a semi-documentary film based on his 1947 essay "Hirohito's Struggle to Surrender," which had been published by *Foreign Service*, the mouthpiece for a major American veterans organization of which Fellers was the public affairs director. The article was immediately republished during that year by *Reader's Digest* (July edition) and translated into Japanese by the magazine's Japanese subsidiary for its September edition.

I discuss in this essay the background and details regarding the failed attempt to create the semi-documentary based on Fellers's essay and observe the reasons behind its failure. Furthermore, I address Fellers's motivation for getting involved in this project.

#### SHU TAGUCHI APPROACHES FELLERS

Shuji (Shu) Taguchi, a relatively well-known independent film producer, approached Fellers in a letter dated January 14, 1949, for permission to use his article as the basis of a documentary. Taguchi first got into touch with *Reader's Digest Japan* president Dennis McEvoy, who during the war had worked in the US Navy's Intelligence unit (Office of Naval Intelligence Psychological Warfare Branch, Op-16-W) under Capt. Ellis Zacharias, the coordinator of psychological warfare against Japan, who worked with

Fellers's group. McEvoy had been president of *Reader's Digest Japan* since its inception in 1946.

Taguchi had in mind creating a semi-documentary with the tentative title "The Last Day of the Japanese Empire." Fellers responded to Taguchi that he needed to have the right to censor the script and the cast; that he be allowed to be present at the production of the film; that "proper acknowledgment be made"; and, most important, that the film credit his psychological warfare campaign as contributing to the Japanese surrender. This campaign had been done through air dropping of leaflets so that the Japanese people "learned the truth about the war" and "supported the Emperor in his decision to force the militarists to surrender." Fellers wanted a film that would foster good relations between Japanese and Americans by portraying favorably the character of the Japanese emperor and the Japanese people (with a caveat "if properly presented"), alongside "the decency of the American campaign and occupation." Although Fellers believed the proposed semi-documentary would do well in the United States, he instructed his own confidant, Lt. Col. J. Woodall Greene, that "the film must be watched to make sure that MacArthur's views and American prestige are in no way violated." Fellers thought that "the Japanese might easily do this without realizing it." Taguchi replied in a letter dated February 2 that he agreed with Fellers that the film should portray the effectiveness of his psychological warfare campaign and that, "if properly done," it would significantly contribute to fostering amicable relations between the two countries. (Although Fellers in his *Reader's Digest* article argued that the atomic bombs were unnecessary, it was not clear how that would be portrayed in the film, nor for that matter the draconian firebombing of Japanese cities.)<sup>4</sup> Greene, in late February, began a new assignment under G-2 (Intelligence) chief Charles Willoughby to carry out "psychological warfare" in Japan and in the Far East in the context of the Cold War.<sup>5</sup> Taguchi was very bullish about the outlook for this proposed semi-documentary. Taguchi informed Fellers, "I have been assured of powerful financial backing by one of the leading motion picture magnates in Japan, Mr. Takejiro Otake of the Shochiku Motion Picture Company." Taguchi had already submitted a synopsis of the proposed documentary to Don Brown, the officer in charge of the Information Branch in the Civil Information and Education Section, or CIE, and George Gerck, chief of the Motion Picture Branch in the CIE.<sup>6</sup> (CIE's preceding wartime organization had been Fellers's Psychological Warfare Branch.) With regard to the issue of Fellers's rights in regard to the film, Taguchi proposed a generous offer

based on his bullish outlook:

I told Mr. Greene that we were willing to offer you ten per cent (10%) of the gross income of the film in Japan with a minimum guarantee of Two Million Yen. . . . Moreover, we would be happy to share with you on a fifty-fifty basis the income derived from showing of the film outside of Japan proper, including the United States.<sup>7</sup>

During the war, Taguchi had been Nihon Eigasha's Manila bureau chief. The company was a state-sponsored media company that produced a propaganda news film series called *Nihon News*. By the end of the war his weight had dwindled due to malnourishment and disease by thirty kilograms down to thirty kilograms (sixty-six pounds). After the war, Taguchi started Shu Taguchi Production in the Nippon Ko-on film lab building in the Ginza area. In 1947 Taguchi made his debut as an independent documentary film producer and director with *Tachiagare Nippon* (Can Japan rise to its feet?) in which he, as the creator of the documentary, encouraged the revival of Japan. This film caught the attention of the US State Department's Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs, a remnant of the disbanded wartime government propaganda machine, Office of War Information; it saw Taguchi's talent in producing documentaries as useful in educating the Japanese about reforms carried out under the Allied Occupation of Japan. In 1948 Taguchi produced *Men Who Fish*, which was a public relations film that aimed at informing viewers about changes in the fishing laws that freed ordinary fishermen from feudalistic relations in the fishing industry. The movie won first prize in the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs international film competition. Another documentary of his that was completed about a year later, *This Land Is Mine*, was about the positive impacts of land redistribution, a central reform program of the General Headquarters (GHQ) under MacArthur; the film won second prize in the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs international competition. (In 1950 Taguchi produced *The Eye of a Typhoon*, a documentary that for the first time in history filmed inside the eye of a typhoon; the person in charge of special effects for this film, Eiji Tsuburaya, later started a science fiction monster series and the *Ultraman* series.)<sup>8</sup>

#### WHY FELLERS?

Fellers argued to the authorities in the GHQ that Emperor Hirohito had

personally approved the scenario of the proposed documentary. I need to explain why Fellers believed this was the case. Although there is no indication that the emperor actually gave his approval to Taguchi's script, called "A Prayer for Peace," which was based on Fellers's *Reader's Digest* article and Joseph Grew's memoir about his years as ambassador to Japan from 1932 to the outbreak of the Pacific War. Fellers believed that information forwarded to him in 1947 from Japan indicated that he had done so.

On May 9, 1947, Fellers sent a copy of the final galley of his *Reader's Digest* article to Greene, his trusted confidant in the Psychological Warfare Branch and now a central member of GHQ's CIE, the department in charge of censorship. Fellers asked Greene to show his article to Hidenari Terasaki, former diplomat and an interpreter for the emperor, as well as to other Japanese whom Greene considered important. Greene responded to Fellers in a letter dated May 16 informing him that he was now waiting for approval for the publication of Fellers's essay.<sup>9</sup>

Shortly after the September edition of the *Reader's Digest Japan* came out with Fellers's article, Terasaki got a copy from Greene. He subsequently presented the main points of the Fellers article to Emperor Hirohito on September 12.<sup>10</sup> On September 19 Terasaki described to Greene his meeting with the emperor. Greene, in turn, reported this information to Fellers. Although it is unclear the extent to which Terasaki accurately presented the Fellers article to the emperor, it is most likely that Terasaki gave a detailed description of it. According to Greene, the emperor stated that Fellers's description of Japan's negotiations with the Soviet Union was substantially accurate; that the important facts presented in the Fellers article were for the most part in accordance with the emperor's memory of them; and that, although Fellers overdramatized the parts describing the emperor's decision to surrender during the meetings on August 10 and 14, the overall picture of those meetings was accurate.<sup>11</sup> Terasaki's letter dated December 19, 1947, informed Fellers that the emperor expressed his deep appreciation for what Fellers had done for him.<sup>12</sup> Why the emperor was grateful to Fellers can be understood from the following passage in his article:

As titular leader of Japan, of course, the Emperor cannot but share technically the war guilt of his leaders. Yet that does not lessen the high drama of a figurehead Emperor who dared face down his own fanatic militarists, usurp their power, and compel them by sheer strength of will to surrender a defeated country to a superior enemy.<sup>13</sup>

There are many historically inaccurate and exaggerated arguments in this article, such as the emperor indicating his wish to government officials to end the war shortly after the battle of Iwo Jima in February 1945.<sup>14</sup>

#### FELLERS OPPOSES ABDICATION

The main motive for Fellers's favorable response to Taguchi's inquiry was his desire that the emperor continue to reign in Japan as a bulwark against Communism. Fellers's attitude toward the emperor was a minority conservative approach both inside and outside Japan, where the more commonly raised issue was of the degree of the emperor's responsibility for Japan's wartime national security decisions.

In a July 8, 1948, letter to Terasaki, Fellers pointed out widely reported rumors in the American press regarding the emperor's possible abdication and asked Terasaki to convey his advice to the emperor not to abdicate in case he was considering it. Fellers argued that if his abdication coincided with the end of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East it would "in the eyes of the world, identify the Sire [the emperor] as one of the Military clique." Fellers told Terasaki that the emperor was never part of this clique but that his abdication at such a moment would have the following impact:

It would reverse public opinion in this country, which is beginning to turn to the impression that the Emperor was *not* responsible for the war. Abdication would fix the Sire's place in history as one who sympathized with war criminals and, as a gesture of sympathy for them, gave up his throne. Anti-Emperor groups would immediately claim his abdication was a *protest* against the sentences. . . . [H]is abdication . . . would not give the Sire peace of mind—quite the contrary—it would leave him forever frustrated.

Fellers believed that "no greater service could have been provided by the Emperor than his role in stopping the war and in giving his people spiritual leadership during this chapter of peace." He argued that history would emphasize that Japan shed feudalism in the aftermath of war and "merged spiritually with Democratic America." Fellers suggested that once a peace treaty with Japan was concluded, the emperor should "consider recording his entire struggle with the military and then project his views of Japan's new destiny guided by new spiritual values. His work should be published

widely. The Sire owes this to his people—it should be his contribution toward the establishment of peace on earth.”<sup>15</sup> It is not known whether or not Terasaki conveyed the above message from Fellers to the emperor. Fellers sent this letter to Terasaki through Lieutenant Colonel Greene, who, in a letter dated October 23 to Fellers, informed him that he had, during a dinner meeting a week before, shared with the emperor’s younger brother, Prince Takamatsu, and his wife the contents of this letter, in which they showed keen interest.<sup>16</sup>

### THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Taguchi offered Fellers a minimum guarantee of 2 million yen (about \$5,555) for his permission to use “Hirohito’s Struggle to Surrender”; more would be paid depending on how the film performed in theaters. Taguchi wanted the movie to be shown in the United States, but Fellers expressed caution because of different cinematic styles; he, however, thought he would approach Hollywood directors about making an American version. Although Fellers released the copyright of his article for Taguchi’s proposed documentary film, the project never got beyond CIE’s permission to start production based on that script, “A Prayer for Peace.” On August 16, 1949, however, Fellers sent a letter to CIE director Lt. Col. Donald Nugent stating the advantages of producing the proposed documentary: “It occurs to me much is to be gained by the filming of this story. It is pure drama, reflects favorably on the Emperor, and on the Japanese people. It will go a long way toward the complete discrediting of the Militarists, which, of course, is one of the primary aims of our Occupation.” Fellers informed Nugent that the emperor himself read the Japanese translation of his “Hirohito’s Struggle to Surrender” and his report on the effectiveness of the psychological warfare against Japan; the latter was used in writing the former, and the notes in the report consisted of Fellers’s interviews with Kantaro Suzuki, Mitsumasa Yonai, Lord Keeper of Privy Seal Koichi Kido, and other officials close to the emperor who played important roles in Japan’s decision to surrender. Fellers told Nugent that “the Emperor himself read my notes and reported they were accurate except for a few minor details.” The emperor “liked” the article and “said that it was generally correct.” Based on the discussion of how Terasaki conveyed Fellers’s article, Fellers made an exaggerated presentation to Nugent on this issue.

In preparing his “Report on Psychological Warfare in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1944–1945” (hereafter referred to as the PWB [Psychological

Warfare Branch] report), Fellers had gathered historical documents and other evidence, including the interviews with Suzuki, Yonai, and Kido conducted during the first three months of 1946. Fellers apparently lent this report to Terasaki to get feedback from the emperor regarding the impact of the leaflets dropped from the sky on his decision to surrender. Terasaki informed Fellers that the emperor replied that it had a significant impact.

Fellers's PWB report was based on his Pacific War experience and his postwar investigations in Japan, which also included Kido's diary and the emperor's own recollections of the war years, known as "The Emperor's Monologue." The PWB report was Fellers's earliest presentation of the argument that in the period between the German surrender and the first atomic bomb explosion over Hiroshima, Japan and the United States had missed opportunities to reach an early settlement of the Pacific War.<sup>17</sup>

Fellers cajoled Nugent to approve the script for this documentary film project, stating that "I would be the last to want it cleared without your complete approval." Fellers emphasized that if the CIE disapproved of the script, this would mean postponement of a documentary about the Japanese surrender until after the end of the Occupation. At that time, the Japanese would create a documentary with "understandable bias," which might not serve to "strengthen the leadership of the Emperor" and undermine "Soviet prestige and the Communist movement." The fact that the script was based on Grew's memoir and Fellers's article "should eliminate any criticism that the Japanese are endeavoring to whitewash any phase of the war or circumstances of surrender."<sup>18</sup>

The fact that Fellers did not tell Nugent that the emperor had approved the script "A Prayer for Peace" raises questions about what Fellers told Taguchi on this issue. In a July 30 letter to Taguchi, Fellers endeavored to create the impression that the emperor had approved the production of a semi-documentary based on "Hirohito's Struggle to Surrender." Because Fellers never mentioned to Taguchi about the episode in 1947 when Terasaki and Greene sought the emperor's opinion of the article, it appeared as if the emperor had recently given his approval of the "script" for Taguchi's proposed film project. In order to provide leeway for any problem that might arise as a result of this, Fellers informed Taguchi that the emperor would like to see any changes made to the "script" (actually Fellers's article).

At the same time as Fellers was writing this to Taguchi he wrote a letter to one of Emperor Hirohito's confidants, Yasumasa Matsudaira, about the possible need for his assistance in the film project; this was his way of



securing a channel to the emperor in case of problems that might arise in the production of the documentary. As Greene pointed out to Fellers, the latter needed to secure approval of the film script from the emperor. But Fellers decided to avoid this for the time being by claiming that the emperor had already approved the script because the emperor had allegedly seen the so-called script as “Hirohito’s Struggle to Surrender.”

When Taguchi sent Fellers his draft script “A Prayer for Peace” through Greene, who had briefly returned to the United States, Fellers looked through it and made extensive comments. Fellers thought the title should be changed to “Hirohito’s Struggle.” He also thought that “we are not yet ready for the atomic bomb on August 6.” Whether or not Fellers was telling Taguchi to drop this subject is unclear, but what is clear is that Fellers believed that “it has not been clearly established how the Emperor had endeavored to force the peace. . . . My point is the dropping of the atomic bomb in itself did not force the surrender. The decision was made long before the bomb was dropped.”<sup>19</sup> Fellers wanted to promote the idea that his psychological warfare played an important role in achieving Japanese surrender.

Fellers suggested to Taguchi that he incorporate in the film script the arguments Fellers made in his article that (1) the Japanese people were aware of the true military situation of Japan’s de facto defeat because of the millions of leaflets dropped from the air; and (2) Emperor Hirohito made his decision to surrender after his confidant Koichi Kido informed him of the leaflet that discussed the Japanese government’s query regarding the terms stipulated in the Potsdam Declaration and the Allied response to it.<sup>20</sup> Fellers urged Taguchi to omit the lines: “True, as Emperor, His Majesty was technically responsible for all acts of his subordinates. But since he was actually a prisoner he cannot be held responsible to history.”<sup>21</sup>

Instead of this observation, Fellers demanded that Taguchi insert the following lines written by Fellers:

The Emperor became the symbol of the New Japan dedicated to peace. Had Hirohito been a true pacifist from the beginning, who had been made a tool of the fanatic militarists without means of fighting back? Had he—actually a figurehead Emperor—at the risk of his life—dared to face down his own militarists, usurp their power, and compel them by sheer strength of will to surrender? I left Japan convinced that he had.<sup>22</sup>

## LUKEWARM RESPONSE FROM THE GENERAL HEADQUARTERS

Shortly after Fellers commented on Taguchi's script, Lieutenant Colonel Nugent wrote Fellers about the overall reaction of GHQ regarding the submitted script, which had "been read by a number of interested persons, not only in CIE but in other sections." Nugent informed Fellers that he "would be only too happy to explore the matter further" if the following "problem" could be "overcome" by changing the script:

It has been the unanimous feeling that the story, while intensely interesting, presents one problem which appears insurmountable—the portrayal of the Emperor on the screen during his lifetime. As you are no doubt aware, even in democratic—or perhaps I should say socialist—Great Britain, the portrayal on the stage or screen of the reigning monarch is unthinkable. I am not sure that it is prohibited legally—but certainly it is by custom of long standing.

Nugent, therefore, informed Fellers that "this headquarters" believed it was "highly inappropriate . . . to take a position which would establish a precedent in this matter in Japan, even though it is realized that the documentary film is intended to be constructive in every way."<sup>23</sup>

After reading this letter, Fellers wrote on September 27 to Nugent that he believed that the proposed documentary film could not be produced without the emperor's "approval." He stated that a script featuring a living emperor would not pose a problem "if it were known to the people the Emperor approved." Fellers informed Nugent that "if this suggestion is impractical, I am of the opinion that Mr. Taguchi would examine the possibility of another solution."<sup>24</sup> On hearing from Nugent's office that Fellers should discuss with Taguchi "the possibility of altering the treatment" of the emperor in the proposed documentary film,<sup>25</sup> Fellers wrote to Greene in Japan that he was not going to do anything about this project until he heard Greene's advice on this issue. Fellers believed the emperor's comment on "Hirohito's Struggle to Surrender" was tantamount to his approval of "the scenario" for the proposed documentary film. He hoped to provide CIE with this "information . . . without courting [their] disfavor." It is not known whether Fellers told Nugent and his staff at CIE that Taguchi had decided to approach the Imperial Household by himself in hopes of securing their approval for the production of his documentary.<sup>26</sup> The fact was that Taguchi had made no such approach to the Imperial Household.

## THE SCRIPT RECEIVES CIE APPROVAL

What happened between mid-October 1949 and mid-March 1950 is not known. On March 11, 1950, Fellers received a letter from Greene (missing in the Fellers papers). In that letter, Greene apparently informed Fellers that “SCAP has finally cleared our script.” Fellers was elated and wrote Taguchi that “the film will do immeasurable good in strengthening the Emperor and in discrediting the Japanese militarists. It will also indirectly strike a blow at Communism.” Fellers was interested in producing an American version of Taguchi’s documentary film. He told Taguchi that “I know personally two leading Hollywood producers, [Merian] C. Cooper and John Ford.” Cooper, an Army pilot from the First World War years to the 1920s, had served as chief of staff for the Fifth Air Force in MacArthur’s Southwest Pacific command and in the 1930s was a well-known American film producer; he produced *King Kong* in 1933. After the war, in 1950, he collaborated with his friend John Ford to produce the films *Wagon Master* and *Rio Grande*.

Because Greene could not act as Fellers’s agent because of US government regulations, in June Fellers hired T. Nakajima in Japan, who was introduced to Fellers by Greene, as his agent. Fellers also applied for a license from GHQ so he could assign the rights of his article “Hirohito’s Struggle to Surrender” to Taguchi for production of his semi-documentary film. His application for a license took place less than two weeks before the sudden outbreak of the Korean War on June 25. Fellers was informed by his friend Brig. Gen. Frayne Baker, executive chairman of the Foreign Investment Board, three days after MacArthur’s UN forces successfully made amphibious landing at Inchon, that his application for a license sent to this board through CIE had been approved.

## THE FILM PROJECT FAILS

During the licensing process, Fellers asked Taguchi if he had incorporated the suggestions he had made to “A Prayer for Peace.” Believing that the film production was going well,<sup>27</sup> Fellers, in February 1951, instructed his agent Nakajima to send the film to him as soon as it was completed. Fellers was planning to contact film producers Cooper and Ford “at the right time.”<sup>28</sup>

Shortly before Fellers sent his instruction to Nakajima, he received a handwritten note from Greene in Tokyo informing Fellers that “you are

getting some publicity in Moscow” as “general arrangements” for the production of the film was “about complete” and the production was soon to begin. Greene was going to make sure that Fellers’s minimum guaranteed payment for the film would be increased to 2.5 million yen before the production commenced.<sup>29</sup>

The message from Moscow was an anonymous commentary printed in *Izvestia* under the title “The Japanese Emperor Becomes a Screen Star,” which was broadcast in Japanese by Moscow Soviet Far Eastern Service on January 8, 1951, at 1200 GMT:

MacArthur made up his mind to produce a picture of Hirohito in order to stress that Hirohito is a stubborn advocate of peace. The preparation for the filming of *The Emperor* has begun in splendid style. Who do you expect has been invited to write the scenario? It is the . . . general, who, during the Pacific War, conducted (bacteriological) warfare from MacArthur’s headquarters.<sup>30</sup>

Fellers, of course, never conducted bacteriological warfare, and it is unknown whether this description was a mistake or some kind of sarcastic commentary on psychological warfare.

The broadcast from Moscow emphasized that “all this deceitful propaganda is merely aimed at hiding the Emperor as a war criminal from the eyes of the people.” The Korean War was in a phase in which the mostly American United Nations forces, under MacArthur’s command, were bitterly fighting North Korean and Chinese forces along the 38th parallel in the aftermath of the Chinese intervention that pushed back the UN forces from the North Korean border with China in November.

It is unlikely that MacArthur, who was commanding a major war, played a role in backing the film project of Fellers and Taguchi. Back in March 1949, Greene had informed Fellers that when he brought up the issue of the proposed documentary film project to MacArthur’s aide-de-camp, Laurence Bunker, Bunker replied that he thought MacArthur would not support a project in which the emperor played a central role. According to Greene, Bunker “called Nugent of CIE and told him he was against the idea and thought it should be stopped before it be put on the Imperial Household to disapprove it, or have CIE disapprove it as a matter of policy.”<sup>31</sup>

Bunker thought that Fellers did not deserve to receive a lot of money for information collected while serving as an officer of the US Army in Japan.

On the other hand, Greene had talked to Mrs. MacArthur, who held a

favorable opinion of Fellers and his article. She “could not see any harm in the production” of a documentary film based on his article. Yet, she declined to endorse the project and suggested to Greene that Fellers write directly to MacArthur for the latter’s approval.<sup>32</sup>

Fellers, however, did not do this, even though Taguchi had wanted him to secure MacArthur’s backing. Although Fellers remained in touch with General MacArthur through Mrs. MacArthur between 1946 and 1948, General MacArthur had distanced himself from Fellers on issues concerning the Allied Occupation of Japan. Fellers learned in a memorandum written by Bunker on May 6, 1947, that General MacArthur now claimed that he and Fellers “were frequently diametrically opposed in their views of the occupation and international matters” and that “on several occasions individuals had misinterpreted General Fellers’ [*sic*] expression of opinion as those” of MacArthur.<sup>33</sup>

Greene, who was conducting “psychological warfare” under General Willoughby in G-2, fully supported Fellers because the project dovetailed with what he was doing. Furthermore, he learned shortly after his first conversation with Bunker regarding the film project that the Civil Censorship Detachment of G-2 was evaluating “other film projects in which a life of the current Emperor would have to be portrayed by some local actor.” They “were all going to be rejected” because “the major studios are still controlled by Communists and any picture of this nature would not portray the Emperor to the best interest of Japan.” The detachment was concerned that such projects “might open the way for Communists to produce pictures or propaganda that also might be detrimental.” Yet, the detachment looked favorably on the project of Fellers and Taguchi since it portrayed “the Emperor as a forcible character bringing about peace.” Greene pointed to the fact that the CIE’s job was to make sure films shown in Japan were “not detrimental to the Occupation or to the best interests of Japan.”<sup>34</sup> Greene, Fellers, and Taguchi all believed their film project did not conflict with the CIE’s mission as such.

Fellers was naturally disappointed when Taguchi, after a long silence beginning in the autumn of 1949, reported to him in July 1951 that he had to postpone indefinitely the film project because of Shochiku’s inability to decide on the production of the proposed documentary film. “I had several talks with Shochiku officials, and they . . . had a series of conferences among themselves regarding the production of this film. As I understand it, the results of these conferences were all inconclusive. No final decision was apparently reached.” Shochiku viewed the film project as “a poor risk”

because “the Japanese Motion Picture Code Committee [MPCC] . . . was afraid to go all-out in supporting the picture.” Taguchi blamed the CIE for this situation because its clearance of the script was “a negative one at best” and its attitude toward the film project was “extremely passive.” Hence the MPCC took their cue from the CIE.<sup>35</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Although Greene reassured Fellers in October that the film project remained alive, it was, in fact, over because the San Francisco Peace Treaty had been signed on September 8, 1951, and the Occupation was going to end on April 28, 1952. Taguchi’s stillborn documentary film project should be understood in the context of Fellers’s interest in establishing a view of the Japanese emperor as a spiritual leader of peaceful Japan. But for what purpose? Fellers wanted the semi-documentary film completed and shown shortly before Japan regained full independence in order to spread his conservative dissenting view of the emperor as a complete pacifist and to use the monarch’s influence in Japanese society as a bulwark against Communism in Japan and the revival of militarism.

Greene probably wanted to continue exploring the film project so as to use it for psychological warfare that would promote the idea of the Japanese rallying around the emperor and rejecting Communism in the ongoing Korean War. But, as I have pointed out, Fellers had told Greene the film project was only worth pursuing during the Occupation when the United States dominated Japanese society.

In addition to the controversy of portraying a living emperor in a movie, the proposed semi-documentary focused on the most controversial aspect of Japanese history during wartime: the emperor’s degree of responsibility for the war. Because of the divisiveness of this issue in Japanese society at that time, and even now, the film project of Fellers and Taguchi was probably doomed to fail. Still, the fact that the CIE approved the production of the film based on Fellers’s article points to the potential usefulness of the movie for psychological warfare in the Cold War as believed by Fellers, Greene, the censorship section of G-2, and probably the senior members of the CIE as well.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cinema Today Eiga News, August 20, 2013, <http://www.cinematoday.jp/page/N0055714>, accessed August 30, 2013; and Cinema Today Eiga News, July 30, 2013, <http://www.cinematoday.jp/page/N0055178>, accessed August 30, 2013. According to the *Kogyo Tsushinsha* website, the film was first shown throughout Japan on July 27 and ranked third in sales revenue for July 27–28. Cinema Ranking Tsushin, Kogyo Shunyu Ranking, July 27–28, 2013, <http://www.kogyotsushin.com/archives/extra/201307/28000000.php>, accessed August 30, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Box Office Mojo, “Emperor,” <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=emperor.htm>, accessed August 30, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: Time, 1962).

<sup>4</sup> Taguchi to Fellers, January 14, Fellers to Taguchi, January 21, Fellers to Greene, January 21, and Taguchi to Fellers, February 2, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library, Norfolk, Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> Greene to Fellers, February 26, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library. Greene talks about “a new top secret division” to which Willoughby is thinking of assigning him in his letter to Fellers on October 23, 1948, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>6</sup> Taguchi to Fellers, February 2, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library. The minimum guarantee later was demanded by Fellers to be increased to 2.5 million yen due to the depreciation of the yen; see Fellers to Taguchi, March 20, 1950, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>7</sup> Taguchi to Fellers, February 8, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>8</sup> With regard to representative works of Shu Taguchi, see “Films on Yamagata,” <http://www.yidff.jp/2011/program/11p5-e.html>, accessed August 30, 2013. With regard to the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs in the State Department, see “Records of the United States Information Agency,” <http://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/306.html>, accessed August 30, 2013. Shu Taguchi’s son is also a respected film producer, and his niece is Tetsuko Kuroyanagi, an internationally famous Japanese actress and TV talk show host as well as author of best-selling books; see “Kinenkan Dayori: Dai ni kai Kamakura Cinema Salon,” April 20, 2013, [http://www.kamakura-kawakita.org/diary\\_87.html](http://www.kamakura-kawakita.org/diary_87.html), accessed August 30, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 12, MacArthur Memorial Library. Joseph C. Grew, *Ten Years in Japan*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944). The book was translated into Japanese by the newspaper company Mainichi Shimbunsha in 1948. Taguchi’s script, “A Prayer for Peace,” cannot be found in the Fellers papers, and this

article uses the comments Fellers made in a letter to Taguchi about “A Prayer for Peace.”

<sup>10</sup> See Terasaki’s diary entries for July, August, and September 1947 in *Showa Tenno Dokuhakuroku Goyogakari Nikki* [The emperor’s monologue: The diary of Emperor Hirohito’s aide Terasaki Hidenari] (Tokyo: Bungeishunju, 1991). Greene to Fellers, September 30, 1947, Bonner Fellers Papers RG 44a, box 2, folder 12, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>11</sup> Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 12, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>12</sup> Terasaki to Fellers, December 19, 1947, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 23. Diary entries for September 19, 1947, and December 19, 1947, are in Terasaki, *Showa Tenno Dokuhakuroku*.

<sup>13</sup> This quote began with the following sentence in the *Foreign Service* version but not the *Reader’s Digest* version: “Was Hirohito always a pacifist who had been made a tool of the fanatic militarists without means of fighting back? I left Japan convinced that he was.” See a copy of the article from the July 1947 issue of *Foreign Service* in “Bonner Fellers,” Post-Presidential Individual Series, Herbert C. Hoover Papers, Herbert C. Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa.

<sup>14</sup> Haruo Iguchi, “The First Revisionists: Bonner Fellers, Herbert C. Hoover and Japan’s Decision to Surrender,” in *The Unpredictability of the Past: Memories of the Asia-Pacific War in US-East Asia Relations*, ed. Marc Gallicchio (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 51–84.

<sup>15</sup> Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 23, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>16</sup> Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 12, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>17</sup> With regard to the process leading to Fellers’s writing of his PWB report, see Haruo Iguchi, “Bonner Fellers and US-Japan Relations, June 1945–June 1946,” *Journal of American and Canadian Studies* 20 (2002): 73–80.

<sup>18</sup> Fellers to Nugent, August 16, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>19</sup> Fellers to Taguchi, September 6, 1949, Comment on “A Prayer for Peace,” 1, 3, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>20</sup> Fellers to Taguchi, September 6, 1949, Comment on “A Prayer for Peace,” 2, 4, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>21</sup> Fellers to Taguchi, September 6, 1949, Comment on “A Prayer for Peace,” 1–2, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>22</sup> Fellers to Taguchi, September 6, 1949, Comment on “A Prayer for Peace,” 5, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>23</sup> Nugent to Fellers, September 12, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>24</sup> Fellers to Nugent, September 27, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.



<sup>25</sup> Lt. Col. I F. C. Dahlquist, Acting Chief, CIE Section, to Fellers, October 10, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>26</sup> Fellers to Greene, October 18, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>27</sup> Fellers to Taguchi, June 14, 1950, Fellers to Nakajima, June 14, 1950, Fellers to the Foreign Investment Board, June 14, 1950, Fellers to Brigadier General Frayne Baker, Executive Chairman, Foreign Investment Board, GHQ-FEC, June 15, 1950, Lt. Col. Nugent to Fellers, September 5, 1950, Frayne Baker to Fellers, September 18, 1950, and Fellers to Nakajima, February 2, 1951, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library. On Cooper, see Mark Vaz, *Living Dangerously: The Adventures of Merian C. Cooper, Creator of King Kong* (New York: Villard, 2005).

<sup>28</sup> Fellers to Nakajima, February 2, 1951, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 20, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>29</sup> Greene to Fellers, undated (sometime in mid to late January 1951), RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library. See note 6 regarding financial issues.

<sup>30</sup> Greene to Fellers, undated (sometime in mid to late January 1951), Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>31</sup> Greene to Fellers, March 8, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>32</sup> Greene to Fellers, March 12, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>33</sup> Laurence Bunker, "Memorandum for Record," May 6, 1947, RG 5, box 2, folder 6, MacArthur Memorial Library. With regard to Fellers informing General MacArthur about the presidential election, including telling this to the general through Mrs. MacArthur, see Haruo Iguchi, "Kyowato Uha to Douglas MacArthur Daitoryokoho Yoritsu Undo (The right-wing Republicans and the MacArthur-for-President movement)," *Shirin* [Journal of history] 93, no. 5 (September 2009): 96–134.

<sup>34</sup> Greene to Fellers, March 8, 1949, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 2, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

<sup>35</sup> Taguchi to Fellers, July 24, 1951, Bonner Fellers Papers, RG 44a, box 4, folder 2, MacArthur Memorial Library.

