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The Asia Foundation’s Motion Picture Project and the Cultural Cold War in Asia

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Abstract: Under the leadership of its first president, Robert Blum (1953-1962), The Asia Foundation, a private non-profit organization, was actively involved in the motion picture industries in Cold War Asia. The Asia Foundation had covertly supported anti-Communist motion picture industry personnel, ranging from producers, directors, and technicians to critics and writers in Japan, Hong Kong, Burma, and South Korea, as well as American and British motion picture producers in Malaysia and Thailand through clandestine activities. Drawing on archival materials from The Asia Foundation Records at the Hoover Institution Archives and the Robert Blum Papers at the Yale University Library, this article is a focused account of the origins and development of the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Asia (FPA) by unveiling the existence of The Asia Foundation and its forgotten motion picture projects in Asia.

Keywords: Cultural Cold War, The Asia Foundation, The Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia, Asian Film Festival, Japanese Cinema, Hong Kong Cinema

On December 17, 1953, Charles M. Tanner, Hollywood liaison of The Asia Foundation (TAF), was having lunch with two Hollywood magnates: Frank Capra, director-producer, and Luigi Luraschi, the head of Foreign and Domestic Censorship at Paramount Studios. Tanner, before this meeting, had already convened with some of the Hollywood heavyweights such as Cecil B. De Mille, Herbert J. Yates, Allen Parr, and a group of first-tier Hollywood scriptwriters. Carleton W. Alsop,¹ an ex-CIA agent, was a mediator and the whole meeting had been arranged by Luraschi.² Tanner was working at TAF’s headquarters in San Francisco. His mission was to meet some of the most influential, powerful, and ideologically ‘appropriate’ Hollywood moguls and ask for their support of the Southeast Asian Film Festival (The Asian Film Festival hereafter),³ an annual event of the newly launched Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia (FPA). The inaugural festival was scheduled to be held in Tokyo in May 1954 (Figure 1). At the meeting with Capra and Luraschi, Tanner solicited them to sponsor the Asian Film Festival by lending an appellation of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) as a sole donor of the 35 mm Mitchell movie camera, the first prize at the festival.⁴ On top of this, Tanner also requested that some of the industry’s celebrated names, like Capra and DeMille, could be present at the festival as Hollywood representatives.

Known as a “fighter against communism,”⁵ Capra had represented the US film industry at the International Film Festival in India in 1952.⁶ Capra was likewise enthusiastic about the trip to Japan. He even suggested, “Not one man should go but a team” to increase Hollywood influence over the Japanese movie industry in order to combat communist motion picture activities in Asia.⁷ Capra’s keen response to the festival raised a number of unanswered

questions: Japanese film executive Nagata Masaichi, President of Daiei Studio, and other film executives in the region initiated the FPA. Its objective, according to the Federation's official letter, was to "promote the motion picture industry in the countries of Southeast Asia and to raise the artistic and technical standards of motion pictures and ensure cultural dissemination and interchange of motion pictures in the Far East."⁸ Given this objective, what was the logic behind Tanner's meetings with Hollywood producers, directors, writers, and executives in support of the FPA? For what purpose, likewise, did TAF get involved in the formation of the FPA and its annual film festival? Who is Tanner, and why were Paramount executive Lurashi and prominent Hollywood directors like Capra and DeMille attached to their activities?

Under the leadership of Robert Blum who became the first president of TAF in 1954, this organization was actively involved in the motion pictures in Asia since its first 'made-in-TAF' feature film *Ludu Aung Than (The People Win Through, 1953)* was produced in Burma. Roughly from 1953 to 1959, to win the battle for hearts and minds in Asia, TAF had surreptitiously backed anti-Communist motion picture industry personnel, ranging from producers, directors, and technicians to critics and writers in Japan, Hong Kong, Burma, and South Korea, as well as American and British motion picture producers in Malaysia and Thailand through covert activities.⁹ The FPA and its annual film festival had been TAF's core motion picture project. It had chiefly functioned as a basecamp for the Foundation's motion picture project whose main objectives were to "strengthen the influence of the anti-Communist elements in the Federation" and "to orient the Federation towards the west instead of the east."¹⁰ Drawing on archival materials from The Asia Foundation Records at the Hoover Institution Archives and the Robert Blum Papers at the Yale University Library, this article is a focused account of the origins and development of the FPA by unveiling the existence of TAF and its forgotten motion picture projects in Asia. With a view to explore the ways in which the United States government-led Cold War cultural policies had influenced the regional film industry in the mid to late 1950s, this study aims to investigate how and to what extent TAF and its field agents furtively acted to construct an anti-Communist motion picture producers' alliance in Asia, responded to local film executives' various needs, and negotiated with the constantly changing political, social, and cultural environments in the region during the project's active periods. This article, from this perspective, first traces the early history of TAF and American cultural diplomacy in Cold War Asia, and then scrutinizes the organization's motion picture activities: their initiation, collaboration with the FPA, and gradual demise and evaporation of the motion picture project by the end of the decade.

The Asia Foundation, CIA, and American Cultural Diplomacy in Cold War Asia

Since Frances Stonor Saunders' *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* was published in 2000, in the realm of cinema studies, film historians have revealed the CIA-Hollywood relationship, in other words, the ways in which the agency worked covertly with Hollywood during the Cold War. In the context of the state-corporate network in the cultural sectors of the Cold War politics and the US film industry's interests, a significant number of studies have scrutinized the Motion Picture Export Association of America (MPEAA), formerly the Motion picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), and its global businesses in the USSR, Eastern Europe, Turkey, Germany, Spain, and also the Soviet films' distributions in the US during the period.¹¹ Juxtaposed to those vast writings, the dearth of scholarship on the American involvement in Asian cinema is striking. Asia has continuously been neglected in the field of cultural Cold War studies, most of which focuses on, as historian Charles K. Armstrong

aply pointed out, “US cultural policy and are concerned with the European “theatre”.”¹² Moreover, little attention has been paid to the significance of TAF and its clandestine activities in the motion picture industry. Nor is it in the interests of many Cold War historians to consider the issues. It is also true that the FPA’s intimate network with TAF, as well as the presence of the FPA itself, has been almost entirely overlooked, omitted, or simply forgotten in the emerging literature on the history of Asian cinema, with the exception of a few anecdotal notes on its annual film festival.

Film historian Poshek Fu notes that the aim of the Asian Film Festival was “to become the Asian equivalent of the Cannes and Venice Film Festivals, a prestigious event at which filmmakers competed and made business deals.”¹³ Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong claims that the Asian Film Festival was primarily a “public relations event for the industries.”¹⁴ Their approaches have been echoed by other Asian film historians who have researched the postwar histories of Asian cinema, but this collective perspective, the Asian Film Festival as a business-purposed event, left out the very presence of the FPA (Figures 2). The Asian Film Festival was, I argue, a regional alliance summit for film executives of the FPA, what I call an alliance of anti-Communist film producers in Asia.¹⁵ The true aim and purpose of the FPA was, in the words of Kim Kwan-soo who was President of Korean Motion Picture Cultural Association (KMPCA), “to protect ‘free Asia’ from the invasion of the communist force throughout the cinema.”¹⁶ Having narrowed the history of the Asian Film Festival to a struggle of a few motion picture studios and executives in Japan and Hong Kong, therefore, previous studies paid little attention to the factors that played out in the formation of the FPA and ultimately *depoliticized* the significance of the organization and its secret alliance with TAF.¹⁷

TAF was originally a creation of the executive branch intended to propagate the US foreign policy interests in Asia. It was established in 1951 as the Committee for Free Asia at the height of the Korean War “by a group of Californians,” according to Robert Blum, “who believed that a non-governmental American organization primarily focused on Asia could help to increase the desire and ability of Asians to resist Communism on their own soil.”¹⁸ Besides its headquarters in San Francisco and two external offices in Washington D.C. and New York City, TAF, as of 1954, had operated fourteen field offices in major cities, from Tokyo and Manila to Karachi and Rangoon. F. Sionil José, a renowned Filipino novelist, reminisced: “many of the foundation representatives were academics with extensive knowledge of the region and of the countries where they are assigned.”¹⁹ Field officers, as Jose remembered, were mostly college professors in Asian studies, journalists, and former state officers. On top of this, the Board of Trustees was composed of twenty-two members who had distinguished careers in both academic and professional fields such as entrepreneurs, writers, educators, and film and media executives.²⁰

Although the ostensible identity of TAF was a private, non-governmental foundation, it has furtively received considerable financial subsidy from the US government, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in particular, and it should rather be called a “quasi-nongovernmental organization.”²¹ TAF’s CIA connection was not publicly acknowledged until it was eventually unveiled by a former CIA agent which was printed by the leftist-inclined magazine *Ramparts* and subsequently *The New York Times* that, in the end, appalled most Asian countries in 1967.²² Like other non-governmental philanthropic institutions that were operated in the battlefield of hearts and minds, such as Beacon, Kaplan, and the Borden Trust, TAF was another camouflaged association shaped and carried by the CIA, and followed the direction of the U.S. government’s foreign cultural policy. Historian Tony Judt suggests that U.S. foreign cultural programmes

“employed 13,000 people and cost USD 129 million” by 1953.²³ Although most of this expenditure went to the intellectual elites of Western Europe, Asia had emerged as a new front in the Cold War with the birth of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Victor Marchetti alleges that TAF had the objective “to disseminate throughout Asia a negative vision of Mainland China, North Vietnam, and North Korea,” and continues, “it (TAF) sponsored scholarly research, supported conferences and symposia, and ran an academic exchange program, a CIA subsidy that reached 8 million dollars a year.”²⁴

Initially, under the guidance of Brayton Wilbur who served as the first chairman of the board,²⁵ TAF’s core activities were divided into two schemes: broadcasting “Voices of Asia” and supporting journalists, writers, and opinion leaders, encouraging them to fight against the communist forces in their respective countries.²⁶ Supervised by Robert Goralski, the Foundation’s former Tokyo officer, “Voices of Asia” project was a tape-recorded radio program that was brought to bear in efforts to increase “goodwill for the foundation throughout Asian countries and at stimulating more American interest in the Asian viewpoint.”²⁷ Instead of sending out propaganda messages to the people of Asia, “Voices of Asia” aimed at the US intellectuals, politicians, and educated civilians in order to call their attentions to the affairs happening in Asia and stimulate more Asia-America collaborations. Three to five half-hour panel discussions were recorded in each country featuring several English-speaking Asian leaders who discussed the cultural, economic and educational problems uppermost in their countries. It was, however, impeded shortly after when a new president, Robert Blum, and program director James L. Stewart commenced their new positions in August 1953.

A native San Franciscan, Blum had compiled a distinguished World War II record as an intelligence operative in Paris, London, and Washington D.C. He then stayed with the OSS (The Office of Strategic Services) until its formal dissolution in 1946, whereupon he took up a number of posts. Blum was in French Indochina, as head of a special technical and economic mission in 1950 and 1951 then became assistant deputy for economic affairs in the office of the United States Special Representative in Europe, stationed in Paris, until he joined TAF in August 1953.²⁸ James L. Stewart, on the other hand, was essentially an Asianist. Born in Kobe, Japan, to Methodist missionary parents and raised in Hiroshima, Stewart studied journalism at Duke University and had worked as an Associated Press correspondent in Chongqing, China, from 1939 to 1944, then a war correspondent for CBS in the China-Burma-India theatre after the attack on Pearl Harbor. In 1947, Stewart had commenced a new post as a public information adviser to the US Army in South Korea and, two years later, became first secretary and public affairs officer at the American Embassy in Seoul. He and his family settled in San Francisco in 1951, where he went to work for TAF.²⁹

Immediately after taking up his new position, Blum redirected the Foundation’s existing cultural activities. Having acknowledged that the communists in Hong Kong and Japan have “switched their strategy from using overt red publications, which have been losing ground, to non-communist media-especially newspapers, magazines, and movies,”³⁰ TAF transformed its focus to the area of underwriting research, stimulating distribution of non-communist literature, sponsoring travel to key conferences and helping various media publish “free world” news and, most of all, produce feature films. Blum firmly believed that no other media presently available could be developed and utilized to reach “so many people in Southeast and South Asia in as short a time and for as low a cost as a soundly conceived motion picture production and distribution program.”³¹ Charles Tanner, an ex-USIS (the United States Information Service) motion picture officer, joined as a Hollywood liaison and a motion picture program supervisor.

Born in Salamanca, New York, Tanner joined the US Air Corps in 1940 and had been a Sergeant, second Lieutenant and then first Lieutenant until his service with the Army was up in 1949.³² With the State Department, he was made the Motion Picture Officer in charge of re-starting the Film Industry in Korea, then later, in Japan. Tanner, after the war, became a Motion Picture officer and Media Director at USIS in South Korea. When the Korean War broke out, Tanner moved to Manila, and then served for USIS in Tokyo for two years. In 1953, Tanner, his wife Dorie, and their baby girl Robin moved to San Francisco where his job at TAF was waiting for him. Blum highly valued Tanner's vast human networks and motion picture industry experience in South Korea, the Philippines, and Japan. Supplementary to Tanner who was assigned to work in the headquarters in San Francisco, John Miller,³³ a special motion picture officer in Tokyo, was reappointed to assist Tanner and Noel Busch, a former *Life* magazine correspondent and the foundation's new representative in Tokyo. Shortly after their new posts began, Tanner and Miller embarked on their first motion picture mission: wrapping up *The People Win Through*, the first TAF-financed feature film whose production had already been slated a year earlier.

***The People Win Through* and the Beginning of the Motion Picture Project**

As a morality tale, *The People Win Through*, based on a play of U Nu, narrates the gradual disillusionment of the idealist revolutionary Aung Min, who had joined the Communist insurrection. The play's message is that good democratic methods are superior to the evil totalitarian ways of the Communists.³⁴ The play had its U.S. premier at the Pasadena Playhouse, California, in October 1951. Cascade Pictures of California picked up a film adaptation of it, written by Hollywood screenwriter Paul Gangelin, President of the Writers Guild of Hollywood, and the company dispatched a film crew and its own filming equipment to Rangoon to begin shooting the film with an all-Burmese cast in late 1952. Michael Charney states that Gangelin "happened to be in Rangoon" and Cascade pictures had "somehow gotten financing for the play, for which it wanted nothing in return, not even for the cost of filming it."³⁵ Not surprisingly, TAF's covert intervention has not candidly been acknowledged in Charney's insightful study of the propaganda films and theaters in Burma. *The People Win Through* was clandestinely backed by TAF.³⁶ The official record reveals that the budget of the film was 203,029 dollars, and the Foundation's Rangoon office took up the production cost.³⁷ TAF's aim was to distribute the film in Burma, Thailand, India, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan where the Buddhists comprised the majority of the population. TAF also considered distributing the film for American audiences. Its initial test screening with TAF executives was, however, rather disastrous. Richard P. Conlon,³⁸ director of Plan, was offended by the quality of the film:

[W]hy it was necessary to spend almost a quarter-of-a-million dollars for this motion picture. There were no high-paid stars. There were no elaborate sets. There were no scenes establishing large expenditures. There were no expensive costumes...By American standards and the standards of the more sophisticated Asian audiences; the film could not be classed as good entertainment. If it were released in its present form for possible distribution in the United States, it is almost certain that there would be a very few, if any, outfits that would undertake to screen the film...It is hard to see how Cascade can realistically justify the expenditure of a quarter-of-a-million dollars.³⁹

Cascade Pictures re-edited the film accordingly and it had the first public preview in Rangoon on December 26, 1953.⁴⁰ In an attempt to raise US interest in the film, Tanner arranged a private screening for *The Christian Science Monitor*. Richard Dyer MacCann, a staff correspondent, wrote an outright favorable article about the strategic weight of the film by emphasizing that *The People Win Through* is a compelling “propaganda weapon” against the ever-increasing influence of Communist propaganda in the Far East.⁴¹ Another private screening in Hollywood followed. Tanner arranged a screening at the MPAA building in Culver City, California, in April 1954. He invited Luraschi, DeMille, and other powerful Hollywood film directors and executives in hopes that they would distribute the film in America. DeMille dismissed the film completely and expressed that the film does not have any commercial potential even if “it were to be edited down and English subtitles added.”⁴² Even worse, *The People Win Through* performed poorly in Asia including Burma (Figure 3).

Blum wrote with great disappointment: “we should not involve ourselves in direct production such as this in the future.”⁴³ With the high price they paid to learn from *The People Win Through*, TAF executives decided to fold their ambitious plan of the US outreach of *The People Win Through*. Instead of outsourcing the productions to the US-based independent film productions, TAF’s motion picture project team implemented a completely new approach. This time, they would collaborate with local film executives in Japan and Hong Kong, two countries Blum and Stewart viewed as their most important strategic grounds to win a battle for hearts and minds.

The Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia

Nagata Masaichi and his right arm Kimura Takechiyo, Executive Secretary of the studio, were sitting next to Busch and Miller at a restaurant in Ginza, Tokyo, in May 1953. Nagata pitched the idea of initiating the FPA and an annual film festival. Busch and Miller instantly liked the idea. Nagata’s proposal was precisely what they had been looking for: creating a “healthy” organization within the motion picture industries in Asia in an effort to reverse rapidly increasing anti-American sentiments and the growing number of communist sympathizers in the region.⁴⁴ Certainly an inter-Asian motion picture organization like the FPA was timely and the most appropriate step to take for the Foundation. Besides, they firmly believed that Japan, arguably the most advanced film producing country in Asia, should lead the organization.

TAF had been searching for a long-term partner in Japan. Murao Kaoru, a Japanese film writer-producer, was commissioned to compile a list of communist leaders of the motion picture industry in Japan. Kaoru named seven film industry employees; Ito Takeo, Miyajime Yoshiise, Saga Zenbei, Iwasaki Akira, Kamei Fumio, Yamamoto Satsuo, and Yamagata Yusaku. Kaoru emphasized that many leftists are “working surrounding these leaders,” and, among film studios, Toei and Shochiku studios are “often used by leftist film production units.”⁴⁵ Daiei, Kaoru wrote, is the only company that “has never produced an anti-American or pro-Communist film.”⁴⁶ Given that, in the words of Miller, Nagata was the “only outspoken anti-Communist leader” in the Japanese film industry.⁴⁷ This Kyoto-born film executive first entered the film business as a studio guide at Nikkatsu in 1926 and was promoted to production manager in ten years. He was well known for his Machiavellian instinct to take hold of power when he surreptitiously sided with Kawazura Ryuzo, the chief of the Information Bureau in Japan, and succeeded by persuading the bureau to consolidate the entire film industry into three major conglomerates: Toho, Shochiku, and Daiei. As president of Daiei, he brought Nikkatsu, his former workforce, under the umbrella of Daiei. Nagata’s fortune, however, almost ended with Japan’s defeat in the

war. The hunt for war criminals was a task of the occupation forces led by Douglas MacArthur, even to the entity of the film industry. Nagata was placed on a list of war criminals and was later discharged from the industry for rehabilitation. In 1951, Daiei's medium-budget period drama *Rashomon* (Kurosawa Akira, 1951) was submitted to the Venice International Film Festival and unexpectedly won the Grand Prix. *Rashomon* even grabbed an Oscar a year later.⁴⁸ The ramifications of this honor at the time were far greater than we can realize now. It was, in fact, a sensation. Its producer Nagata gained respect and jealousy simultaneously from his peers in Japan and motion picture producers in other nations. Nagata was the "Mr. Motion Picture" of Southeast Asia as Loke Wan-tho, President of MP&GI studio in Singapore, aptly named him.⁴⁹

TAF's motion picture project team carried out a clear-cut, comprehensive picture, that is, to demonstrate that non-Communist producers, distributors and exhibitors in Asia would be able to generate substantial profits for churning out non-Communist films, and have better chances of distribution in the international arena, particularly in the US, with a little help from TAF. They moved fast. Right after the meeting with Nagata in Ginza, Tanner was assigned to contact Hollywood celebrities while Nagata went on a tour of Southeast Asia to realize his ultimate dream. TAF's field representatives in Manila, Singapore, and Jakarta arranged meetings between Nagata and local film executives: Run Run Shaw (Malaysia/Singapore), Manuel de Leon (The Philippines), and Djamaludin Malik (Indonesia). With the favorable responses he had received during the tour, the first conference was scheduled to be held in Manila from November 17 to 19, 1953. TAF provided travel grants to the invited delegates. Twenty-four delegates from seven countries attended the first conference. Japan alone dispatched six delegates. Nagata delivered an opening speech:

The chief aim of this project is to promote the motion picture industry in the countries of Southeast Asia, to raise the artistic and technical standards of motion pictures and ensure cultural dissemination and interchange of motion pictures in the Far East. It is not only to raise the standards of motion pictures produced in the various countries of Southeast Asia to world standard but even to higher level than this....I believe in the near future we can obtain world-wide market and other countries will recognize the quality and standard of pictures produced in Southeast Asian countries, and thus get leading positions in the world market.⁵⁰

Expectedly, Nagata was unanimously elected as the first President of the FPA. Run Run Shaw, president of Malay Film Production in Malaysia, became the Vice-President. The headquarters would be located in Tokyo. Nagata appointed six members of the board of directors other than himself and Shaw. Malik (Indonesia), Ho Ah Loke (Malaysia), Prince Yugala (Thailand), Manuel de Leon (The Philippines), Yamazaki Shuichi (Japan), and Runde Shaw (Hong Kong) were chosen⁵¹ (Figure 4). Launching the alliance of anti-Communist motion picture producers in Asia seemed within reach, considering the number of non-Communist film executives. However, paradoxically, William T. Fleming, the foundation's Manila representative, sent out a bitter message to Stewart after the conference. Fleming bemoaned, "TAF-Manila sustained a considerable defeat at the hand of Communist influenced Asian film interests at the Manila planning conference."⁵²

It was Malik, Indonesian delegate and president of Perseroan Film Indonesia (Persari), whose pungent opposition to the FPA's drafted constitution created an unanticipated contention, particularly its geographical scope that excludes the People's Republic of China (PRC), North

Korea, Burma, Vietnam, India, and Pakistan. No sooner had the conference begun than Malik cast doubt on the definition of Southeast Asia. Nagata responded that the Southeast Asian countries are those alongside the Pacific Ocean, namely, Burma, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan. "We have excluded," he underscored, "China occupied by the Communists, that is, Communist China." Nagata added that Burma and Vietnam were not invited, as both countries had not produced enough feature films in the previous year. Malik refuted: "I want to express my regret that the procedure of this conference is not properly done. I mean to say you exclude some countries just because of the reasons you have said. At least, we could send them invitations." He then suggested excluding two Chinas altogether "without discrimination whether it is free China or communist China." Rafael Anton, delegate of the Philippines, interceded the heated debate and proposed to vote among the board members upon receiving a membership application from an organization of motion picture producers in the above mentioned countries, including those of the communist territories. Anton's proposition was hard to repudiate for Nagata and was taken unanimously. The FPA was no longer able to preclude PRC and North Korea from the organization as long as the voting members advocated their applications. The Japanese film delegates, except Nagata, and the Shaw family did not express any objection. They were, after all, entrepreneurs and concerned with their economic interests, not the ideological stances. They all wanted to sell their films to PRC and India. This was the unanticipated "defeat" Fleming noted.

Busch, Miller, and Tanner assumed that Thailand and the Philippines delegates are all anti-Communist fighters and would stand next to Nagata. Indonesia had been a headache for TAF from the very beginning of the FPA. But what put them in a real corner was no other than Hong Kong and Malaysia, and even Japanese delegates who revealed ambivalent attitudes regarding their ideological and political outlooks. Having faced the unforeseen consequence, to launch the anti-Communist alliance of film producers in Asia, assuring more voting members for their objectives was markedly a real challenge to TAF. Busch wrote to Stewart: "the threat of Communist penetration and eventual take-over of the Federation was a real one.... and the battle for control of the Federation has only started."⁵³ Their collective solution was, after exchanging many letters and notes, to mobilize every possible independent pro-American, anti-communist film company in the region in order to obtain more free world voting.⁵⁴ TAF moved fast as the first festival was slated to commence in just a few months. Stewart summoned all TAF field representatives and signaled the precarious circumstances around the FPA. Ward D. Smith, Taipei representative who had turned down the initial invitation from the FPA, arranged a meeting with Peter B. T. Chang, Information Director for the Provisional Government in Taiwan.⁵⁵ Smith stressed that he is working "every angle I can think of to see to it that Taiwan does join the Federation."⁵⁶ Taiwan, consequently, submitted *Women in the Army*, a feature-length documentary film, which was produced by Rural Education Film Corp.⁵⁷ Robert B. Sheeks, Kuala Lumpur representative, contacted British film producer Thomas Hodge, director of the Malayan Film Unit, who is, according to Sheeks, "capable, energetic, and believes strongly in the same principles that we do."⁵⁸ Hodge was a former British foreign officer. He was passionate about the foundation's plan to construct the anti-Communist film producers' network in the region. Hodge joined the Federation in order to diminish the influence of Run Run Shaw whom Hodge called a "non-political opportunist."⁵⁹ In the Hong Kong office, TAF-financed motion picture studio the Asia Pictures, operated by a Hong Kong-based journalist Chang Kuo-sin, had completed its first Mandarin-language feature film, *Chuan tong (Tradition, 1955)*, and it

was ready to be submitted to the festival.⁶⁰ And the first Asian Film Festival began in Tokyo on May 8, 1954.

Only few days before the first festival, Frank Borzage, an honored Hollywood film producer-director, arrived at Tokyo International Airport to attend the first Asian Film Festival as the U.S. movie industry representative. Duke Wales, the director of publicity for MPAA, described: “Japanese hospitality is creating practically an around-the-clock schedule of honors for Frank Borzage...enthusiastic reaction to Hollywood’s recognition of the festival started with the Borzages’ arrival at Tokyo airport, where the red carpet was literally laid out, from the airplane to the custom office.”⁶¹ Borzage was not on TAF’s “most wanted.” Tanner had beseeched Capra, DeMille, John Ford, George Stevens, Mervyn LeRoy, Henry King, and William Holden, but none of them, except Borzage, were available for the event.⁶² It is not known what encouraged him to accept TAF’s invitation but it is worth noting that the Hollywood blacklist forced Borzage into a six-year period of inactivity since the release of *Moonrise* (1948).⁶³ Perhaps he was desperate and longed for a call from Hollywood. Borzage had joined a tour to Argentina in March 1954, just two months before the Asian Film Festival, as a representative of the U.S. motion picture industry. He had served on a jury of the Grand Festival Internacional Cinematografico in Buenos Aires, along with Mary Pickford.⁶⁴

The inaugural address of the first Asian Film Festival was delivered by Otani Takejiro, president of Shochiku Studio. Each of Japan’s “big five” studios submitted their latest films,⁶⁵ and, in addition to the Japanese films, ten features and twelve “cultural and educational” shorts from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia were screened during its twelve-day schedule.⁶⁶ Three films from Ceylon and one from India were screened under “special entries (Not for Contest)” category.⁶⁷ The Indonesian entry *Lewat Djam Malam* (*After the Curfew*, 1954) was cancelled at the last minute due to a political matter and Malik and Usmar Ismail⁶⁸ were absent from the festival.⁶⁹ Nagata expressed his full confidence during the press conference, as *Jigokumon* (*Gate of Hell*, 1953), the first Eastman color film produced by Daiei, had won the Grand Prix at the Cannes International Film Festival only a week earlier. It was certainly the peak of Nagata’s career. He proclaimed, “[T]he worth of Japanese cinema has now been recognized... although Europe and America are important markets, Asia also holds a great future for Japanese movies.”⁷⁰ Daiei’s *Konjiki yasha* (*The Golden Demon*, 1954) walked away with the best motion picture award, and its producer, Nagata, took the trophy.⁷¹ The special MPAA Mitchell Camera Prize was awarded to the Far East Film Company in Thailand for their Eastman color production *Santi-Vina* (1954).⁷² Often considered as the most expensive film produced in Thailand in the 1950s, *Santi Vina* was written and produced specially for the first Asian Film Festival (Figure 5). And it was also the first Thai feature film exhibited at a foreign film festival.⁷³

Other than *Santi-Vina*, however, the Japanese film industry dominated the festival by grabbing five major awards. An editorial in *Kinema Junpo*, a Japanese film magazine, wrote somewhat ostentatiously, “The quality of Japanese cinema justifies the Japanese film industry’s dominion in the festival. To put it bluntly, we are questioning whether the festival still needs any competition categories.”⁷⁴ Miller, after watching most films, committed himself:

It was quite obvious to Southeast Asian feature film producers that the Japanese were ahead of them and that there was a great need for them to increase artistic quality and improve techniques....The first festival was a great success. It is encouraging to report that the festival was not held just for purpose of mutual admiration but provided

worthwhile opportunities for the participants to make a comparative study of each other's product.⁷⁵

He was somewhat disappointed, however, that Asia Pictures' entry to the festival, *Tradition*, was the first to be excluded from any consideration due to its somewhat negative portrayal of a Japanese general that violated the festival regulation,⁷⁶ article 3-6, that is: "Films which are likely to hurt the national feeling of another country of territory." And Taiwan's entry, *Women in the Army*, was also voted out of the festival on the basis of 3-6-B: "films of political or ideological propaganda."⁷⁷ In the absence of Malik, Miller wrote, "Republic of China, Thailand, and the Philippines were sufficiently united to give an anti-Communist character to the Federation." He also emphasized that the Foundation's Mitchell camera award would strengthen the foundation's position in the region.⁷⁸ Miller suggested that TAF should maintain an active, behind the scenes interest in the Federation.

New Direction of The Asia Foundation and the End of the Motion Picture Project

Only a month after the festival, Nagata visited San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles, from June 16 to July 7, 1954. Samuel Goldwyn, Lou Schreiber, Jack Warner, Walter Wanger, Borzage, and Luraschi were included in his full itinerary. Luraschi received a letter from Tanner before his meeting with Nagata. Tanner disclosed Nagata's primary purpose of visiting America. He was rather blunt this time: He [Nagata] needs money, especially dollars. His activities on behalf of the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Southeast Asia and the Asian Film Festival have cost him a considerable amount of cash, and now he needs to recoup.⁷⁹ Certainly, Nagata's intention of this trip was to make multiple deals for distributing two of his award-winning films: *Gate of Hell* and *The Golden Demon*. By leading the FPA, Nagata dreamt of expanding and diversifying markets for Daiei; popular genre films to Asia through the FPA network and films of high production value for major European film festivals and Hollywood, with the help of TAF.⁸⁰ At the luncheon meeting with Warner and Goldwyn, Nagata grinned and jested: "A Japanese proverb states that the greatest compliment that can be paid to a teacher is for the pupil to surpass the one who taught him. I thought that compliment belongs to you [Warner] since I feel that in *Gate of Hell* the pupil had surpassed the teacher."⁸¹

RKO picked up *Gate of Hell* while an independent distributor Edward Harrison chose *The Golden Demon*. It seemed that Nagata gained what he had aimed for. But Nagata soon realized that neither was able to penetrate the mainstream market as the distributors ended up releasing the films through just a handful of theatres in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Despite his anticipation, selling films to America was not a solution for his severe fiscal deficit. In 1955, Nagata failed to win anything abroad, and many of his expensive films, including *Gate of Hell* and *The Golden Demon*, gained only moderate successes in Japan. Even worse, the Japanese critics were completely confounded by the foreign success of *Rashomon* and *Gate of Hell*. One critic in Japan even harshly criticized that the motion pictures, which are winning popularity abroad, are like "goods displayed in a souvenir shop, loud and flashy with no intrinsic value."⁸² Nagata initiated the first Japan-Hong Kong co-production film, with Run Run Shaw, *Yōkihi (The Princess Yang Kwei-fei)* in 1955. It was directed under Mizoguchi Kenji's eloquent touch. Although Shaw put up thirty percent of the film's total budget, it was, strictly speaking, a Daiei production with a partial investment and production collaboration of Shaw & Sons in Hong Kong.⁸³

Nagata needed a single sure shot that would grab the fame again from both the domestic market and international festivals, and this exotic product looked like a perfect case since it had Chinese flavors over the already familiar Japanese exoticism for the Western critics. His desire, however, proved only to be a disaster both commercially and artistically. No American distributors wanted the film and the complete failure of *The Princess Yang Kwei-fei* humiliated Nagata. Evidently Nagata was heading in the wrong direction. Soon Nagata and his status in the Japanese film industry went into a conundrum. Nagata's strategic alliance with TAF, too, made him isolated in the local film industries. What is even worse was that, despite the Foundation's assiduous backing of him, Nagata failed to gain a good reputation in Hollywood. Irving Maas, the vice president of MPEA, derided Nagata as "a very ambitious and shrewd individual, who is very anxious for personal glory" and found him to be "a slippery customer."⁸⁴ Even more perilous, Busch, who had been a strong supporter of Nagata, left the Tokyo office and was reassigned to Bangkok. Delmer Brown, a Japanese historian at the University of California Berkeley, became a new representative in Tokyo. Brown valued more in literature, theatre, and education while paying less attention to the motion picture industry.

After the third film festival which was held in Hong Kong in 1956, the San Francisco office began losing their belief in Nagata and questioning the worth of the expensive price tag of the FPA. It was chiefly due to TAF's gradual policy changes, from direct involvement toward more nuanced and indirect support to the intellectuals and opinion leaders in Asia, but also attributed it to the Japanese producer's indifference to the organization and Nagata's incompetence of leading the organization. Robert D. Grey compiled a long evaluation report after talking with William A. Seiter, a veteran Hollywood film producer, who had observed the third event in Hong Kong as a Hollywood representative. Grey was critical about the festival and Nagata's leadership:

The federation itself is incapable of effective direct action on behalf of its member association. It has made no real progress toward the solution of major problems confronting the Asian picture industries, nor has it even established within its framework the organizational means for approaching work along these lines.... the Federation itself is still essentially a paper organization whose function, and value, is mainly to coordinate and to provide the framework within which cooperation among the member associations can more easily take place. Even this aspect of the Federation's contribution has been weak.⁸⁵

Miller had already acknowledged this problem. He, after observing the second festival, which was held in Singapore (Figure 6), reported that communicating their ideas to the other festival delegates was Nagata and other Japanese delegates' imminent dilemma. "This is a recurring problem" he pointed out, "once again the inability of the vast majority of Japanese film leaders to express themselves adequately in the English language (and the lack of qualified interpreters) severely handicapped them in an important international gathering; a gathering where the majority of representatives were, to a greater or lesser degree, prejudiced against them."⁸⁶ Cho Tong-jae, the foundation's Seoul officer, composed a report after his participation in the fourth festival in Tokyo. He expressed that many of the FPA members were utterly frustrated when they heard a speech of Seiichi Yasui, Mayor of Tokyo. Yasui's speech was, according to Cho, "hewn with all sorts of anachronous and dangerous expressions such as "Great Asia" and "The Asia

Film Festival gradually expanding to influence world motion picture industries.” Things such as the above remind of the old bitter days, and it was really a shocking experience.”⁸⁷

What Cho meant was Yasui’s wordings of “Great Asia” which the Japanese government had obsessively used while fabricating and exploiting an expansive cinema network in the colonized territory under the *Dai-tō-a kyōeiken* (Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere) in the not-so-distant past.⁸⁸ Most East and Southeast Asian countries, accordingly, were still hostile to Japan and vividly remembered Japan’s colonial venture. Perhaps it was TAF motion picture members’ ignorance of the region’s complex history that made them put forward Japan as a “reeducated” son and the financially self-sufficient “big brother” in the region. In 1957, John F. Sullivan who had been critical of the Foundation’s motion picture programs replaced Stewart. Sullivan emphasized, “It appears that whether we like it or not we are in the motion picture business.” “It is also fairly obvious,” he continued, “we feel (now) we should not be in it, at least in a direct role.”⁸⁹ Blum decided to decrease its network with FPA, as well as cut back budgets significantly for most motion picture projects in Asia, including the writer project in Japan, Asia Pictures in Hong Kong, and the Korean Motion Picture Cultural Association in South Korea.⁹⁰

Conclusions

This essay has mapped the ways in which the short-lived TAF motion picture project aimed to construct the alliance of anti-communist film producers in Asia by focusing on the FPA and its annual Film Festival. The FPA was the first intensive postwar inter-Asian motion picture producers’ organization, and actively intervened in every sector of film culture in each member country in the terrain. What TAF’s motion picture project team had hoped for was to “minimize or eliminate the effectiveness of leftist anti-free world influence”⁹¹ in the region’s cinema and win the psychological war against ‘ever-thriving’ Communist forces. They, however, overlooked political instability, intensifying sentiment of nationalism which often incorporated with the communism or the Red Scares, and foreign currency regulations that made it difficult to purchase or borrow raw stocks and new and modern filming equipment from America. In consequence, Indonesian representatives, Malik and Ismail closed their studio in Jakarta in 1957 due to the constant conflict with the government. Filipino cinema went on to suffer a recession by the end of the decade, and the South Korean film industry struggled to survive without stable investment or consistent government policy. The fallacious geographical scope of the FPA was also problematic. At the third AFF in Hong Kong, Alexander Grantham, governor of Hong Kong, at the opening reception, gave his welcome speech. He, interestingly enough, remarks, “[the festival] teaches me some geography, for I had never realized before that Japan was part of Southeast Asia!”⁹²

The FPA was, in the end, a failed project for TAF. Its motion picture men, Tanner, Miller, and Busch were all strong anti-communist warriors equipped with exceptionally confident minds and Puritan work ethics. They all, however, left TAF, one by one, and no one remained by the late 1960s. Tanner resigned from TAF in 1956. As a dedicated Christian practitioner, Tanner, after directing and producing a number of Christian-themed plays, established a Covenant Players in his hometown of Oxnard, California. Miller left two years later to pursue a motion picture career in Hollywood. Busch became a staff writer for *Readers’ Digest* in 1959.⁹³ But it should be noted here that, ironically, the FPA had played a significant role in the formation of the inter-Asian motion picture industry network and had redrawn the imaginary and geo-political map of Asia in the 1960s although TAF’s motion picture team had never intended to do so.

With the significant waning of the Cold War tension in Asia, and a recession in the Japanese film industry at the beginning of the 1960s, the FPA, without TAF's financial supports, was gradually transformed. And the map of the regional film industry also changed. Run Run Shaw might have been the least politically engaged producer in the FPA, but, ironically, his Shaw Brothers Studio probably benefitted the most from the Federation. Throughout the 1960s, Shaw Brothers used the FPA, and particularly the Asian Film Festival, to promote its annual releases and as a conciliation site for co-productions, firmly seizing control of the industry. Shaw, in Hong Kong film historian Law Kar's words, "utilized festival awards to bolster the company's reputation in Southeast Asia."⁹⁴ The Shaw family was no longer the FPA's second-in-command. Run Run Shaw, in 1961, promulgated: "Japan and Hong Kong are both leaders in Asian cinema. With Japan's profound relationship with Southeast Asia and the similarities we share in our cultural backgrounds...we will have to seek total collaboration with our Japanese counterpart."⁹⁵ Another conspicuous change arrived in the form of state intrusion, especially from South Korea and Taiwan, two developmental states. South Korea and Taiwan became keen festival enthusiasts. South Korea hosted the festival in 1961 and 1966, and Taiwan in 1964.⁹⁶ Southeast Asia, by the late 1950s, had largely disappeared from the Asian Film Festival's line-ups although the FPA had initially begun there. Most Southeast Asian film producers expressed discontent with the Federation as South Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong dominated the festival. With the inauguration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1967, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand initiated an ASEAN sub-committee on film. That group staged the first Southeast Asian Film Festival in 1972. In 1974, Indonesia led the establishment of the ASEAN Motion Picture Producers Association.⁹⁷

Nagata, on the other hand, generally maintained his status as a leader of the Japanese Film Industry throughout the 1960s but the Japanese film industry was incurably wounded by the rising popularity of television and the influx of Hollywood films. Daiei declared bankruptcy in 1971. And Japan withdrew from the FPA committee completely in 1972. During the festival in 1972 which was held in Seoul, South Korea, the FPA executives seriously considered ceasing the festival.⁹⁸ But the Asian Film Festival and its mother organization, the FPA, survive and is still holding its annual event (now the Asia-Pacific Film Festival). The most recent edition was held in Macau, China, in December 2013.⁹⁹ The Asian Film Festival's presence in the region, however, has been diminishing since the 1970s and, in the new millennium, the festival carries little clout in Asia's thriving film culture and industry. In 1995, after the Asian Film Festival's 40th event in Jakarta, Indonesia, film critic Marselli Sumarno wrote: "Any international film festival that's 40 years old should by now have acquired respect and recognition from filmmakers, media and filmgoers. So how come the Asia-Pacific film festival, which began in 1954, has yet to earn a distinctive position on the global fest circuit?"¹⁰⁰ Likewise, a decade later, while preparing for the festival's 50th anniversary in 2005, Dr Rais Yatim, Malaysia's Minister of Culture, lamented the paucity of primary materials available. Dr. Yatim wrote: "no one man or entity keeps in stores the 50 year struggle and the success of the Asian Film Festival."¹⁰¹ His words point out the predicament status of the FPA studies.

Despite its historical implications, consequently, the FPA has surprisingly been overlooked, omitted, or simply forgotten in the chronicle of Asian cinema. The FPA has not yet received the appropriate scrutiny. The FPA does not comfortably fit within the rigid borders of national cinema. Indeed, it and other equally important motion picture organizations in Asia during the Cold War era were seldom bound to a single nation. They were mostly regionally constructed entities, closely tied to non-governmental organizations or the cultural policies of

postwar US hegemony. Certainly the FPA was TAF's most ambitious motion picture project. And it had emerged in the exceedingly transformative post-war Asian sphere, which was apparently under US dominion. As the years went by, though, the organization's geopolitical identity was converted from a US-led cultural apparatus to a showcase of developing states in East Asia. Most of all, the exploitation of markets and capital by regional cinema moguls during the 1960s yielded a golden age of motion picture studios. And this regional network, after all these years, still remains, even today.

Notes

1 Carleton William Alsop (1900-1979) worked as an advertising agent and was also an agent to the stars. He was the manager for Judy Garland during the 1940s and 1950s. Alsop was a member of the CIA's Psychological Warfare Workshop and had been sent by the agency to secure the film rights to *Animal Farm* from George Orwell's widow in 1950. Frances Stonor Saunders argued that Alsop was an ex-CIA agent and had been working 'undercover' at Paramount during the 1950s. David N. Eldridge, however, accused Saunders' misinterpretation of Alsop's role and status in the industry. Eldridge found that it was Luraschi whose role and influence at Paramount meshed "perfectly with the interests of the CIA." See Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2001); David N. Eldridge, "'Dear Owen': The CIA, Luigi Lurashi and Hollywood, 1953," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 20, no. 2 (2000): 149-196.

2 Charles M. Tanner, "Trip to Hollywood," Japan Writer Project H-7 (1953-54) file, Box 9, Asia Foundation Records (hereafter AFR), Hoover Institution Archive, Palo Alto, CA.

3 This film festival started as the Southeast Asian Film Festival in 1954 and was subsequently renamed twice: the Asian Film Festival in 1957, then the Asia-Pacific Film Festival in 1982. Throughout this essay, I will use the Asian Film Festival for both the Southeast Asian Film Festival and the Asia-Pacific Film Festival unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ Interestingly enough, TAF had already purchased the camera and it was ready to be shipped to Japan. Apparently TAF only looked for the exalted tag of MPAA.

5 Tanner, "Trip to Hollywood," AFR.

6 *Greatest Show on Earth* (1951), one of DeMille's signature films, was shown at the International Film Festival in India and it was an instant success. "Cecil B. DeMille 1940-1959," Hedda Hopper Papers, Folder 1107, Box 46, Special Collections of Margaret Herrick Library (hereafter SCMHL), Los Angeles, CA.

⁷ Tanner, "Trip to Hollywood," AFR.

8 Transcribed report of "Federation of Motion Picture Producers of Southeast Asia: Organization and Preparation Conference," November 17-19, 1953, Film Festivals (FMPPSEA) 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

⁹ For The Asia Foundation's motion picture activities in Hong Kong and South Korea, see Sangjoon Lee, "On John Miller's 'The Korean Film Industry': The Asia Foundation, KMPCA, and Korean cinema, 1956," *Journal of Japanese and Korean Cinema* 7, no. 2 (October 2015): 95-112; Sangjoon Lee, "Creating an Anti-Communist Motion Picture Producers' Network in Asia: The Asia Foundation, Asia Pictures, and the Korean Motion Picture Cultural Association," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* (forthcoming 2016).

¹⁰ Miller, "Report on First Film Festival in Southeast Asia," May 31, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

¹¹ See Jindriska Blahova, "A Merry Twinkle in Stalin's Eye: Eric Johnston, Hollywood, and Eastern Europe," *Film History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 347-359; Pablo Leon Aguinaga, "State-Corporate Relations, Film Trade and the Cold War: The Failure of MPEAA's Strategy in Spain," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 29, no. 4 (2009): 483-504; Nehzih Erdogan and Dilek Kaya, "Institutional Intervention in the Distribution and Exhibition of Hollywood Films in Turkey," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 22, no. 1 (2002): 47-59; James H. Krukones, "The Unspooling of Artkino: Soviet Film Distribution in America, 1940-1975," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 29, no. 1 (2009): 91-112.

¹² Charles K. Armstrong, "The Cultural Cold War in Korea, 1945-1950," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 1 (2003): 71-99.

¹³ Poshek Fu, "The Shaw Brothers Diasporic Cinema," in *China Forever: The Shaw Brothers and Diasporic Cinema*, ed. Poshek Fu, 1-25 (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 11.

¹⁴ Cindy Hing-Yuk Wong, "Film Festivals and the Global Projection of Hong Kong Cinema," in *Hong Kong Film, Hollywood and the New Global Cinema: No Film is an Island*, eds. Gina Marchetti and Tan Se Kam, 177-92 (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 181.

¹⁵ The Asian Film Festival was, at least for the first few years, not a conventional film festival per se and it was, unlike other nation-bound postwar film festivals, to be hosted in neither a single city nor a country. Instead, it adopted a peripatetic system that moved from city to city in the region each year, and no member country was allowed to accommodate the festival for two consecutive years. Public screenings were not considered, and if it had any, a limited number of films were open to the general public. For a detailed account of the Asian Film Festival, see Sangjoon Lee, "The Emergence of the Asian Film Festival: Cold War Asia and Japan's Re-entrance to the Regional Market in the 1950s," in *Oxford Handbook of Japanese Cinema*, ed. Miyao Daisuke (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 232-50.

¹⁶ "Asian film Festival," *Kyeonghyang Sinmun*, June 19, 1956: 6.

¹⁷ See Kinnia Yau Shuk-ting, "Shaws' Japanese Collaboration and Competition as Seen Through the Asian Film Festival Evolution," in *The Shaw Screen: A Preliminary Study*, ed. Wong Ailing (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Film Archive), 279-91.

¹⁸ Robert Blum, "The Work of The Asia Foundation," *Public Affairs* 29, no. 1 (1956): 47.

¹⁹ F. Sionil Jose, "50 Years of the Asia Foundation," *Philippines Daily Inquirer*, October 20, 2003, sec. F2.

²⁰ Notable board members were: Brayton Wilbur (President of Wilbur-Ellis co.), Raymond B. Allen (Chancellor of UCLA), James A. Michener (Writer), Paul G. Hoffman (President of the Ford Foundation), and Eric Johnston (President of MPPA). It is hardly surprising that none of the board members was associated with the political realm as TAF wished to conceal the Foundation's Washington network and underscore its non-governmental and philanthropic outfit.

²¹ The Foreign Affairs and National Defense Division, "The Asia Foundation: Past, Present, and Future," *Official Report Prepared for the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate* (Washington, 1983), 1.

²² Wallace Turner, "Asia Foundation got CIA Funds," *The New York Times*, March 22, 1967, 1; See also Sol Stern, "A Short Account of International Student Politics and the Cold War with Particular Reference to the NSA, CIA, etc.," *Ramparts* 5, vol. 9 (March 1967): 29-39.

²³ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books), 223.

²⁴ Victor Marchetti and John D. Marks, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence* (New York: Knops, 1974), 172.

²⁵ Brayton Wilbur was a founder of San Francisco-based Wilbur-Ellis Co., and had served as president until his son, Brayton Wilbur Jr., his son, took over the company in 1988. Wilbur Jr. also served as a Chairman of the Board at The Asia Foundation in the 1970s, as well as a director of the San Francisco Opera, a trustee of the Asian Art Museum, and as the 5th president of the San Francisco Symphony.

²⁶ This radio program replaced a previous propaganda activity, “Radio Free Asia,” a weekly live broadcast, which had aired from September 4, 1951 through April 15, 1953 from a rented studio in the commercial radio station KNBC, downtown San Francisco. According to Richard H. Cummings, the initial “Radio Free Asia” programs were “at first 90 minutes long and divided into three segments in Mandarin, Cantonese, and English languages. The programs were broadcast via a short-wave transmitter to Manila, Philippines and from there to China.” Brayton Wilbur, TAF, told the press, “Eventually Radio Free Asia will beam towards the various parts of Asia programs on agriculture, health and other topics designed to assist the people of Asia and to maintain their courage and will to resist Communism.” - Richard H. Cummings, *Radio Free Europe’s “Crusade for Freedom”: Rallying Americans Behind Cold War Broadcasting, 1950-1960* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2010), 52.

²⁷ “Asia Foundation Monthly Report,” October 24, 1953, Box 1, Robert Blum Papers (hereafter RBP), Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library, New Haven, CT.

²⁸ Steve Weissman and John Shock, “CIA Asia Foundation,” *Pacific Research and World Empire Telegram* 3, no. 6 (September-October 1972): 3-4.

²⁹ Charles Burrell, “James L. Stewart – Longtime Liaison to Asia,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 29, 2006.

³⁰ “Asia Foundation Monthly Report,” October 24, 1953, Box 1, RBP.

³¹ John Glover, “Long Range Motion Picture Project,” September 18, 1952, Box 9, AFR.

³² Tanner simply exchanged “his officer’s uniform for business clothes, moving from the Army one day to the State Department, without losing a day’s work,” according to his daughter Robin Johnson-Tanner (Email interview with Robin M. Johnson-Tanner on March 26, 2013). See “Detailed background Charles M. Tanner,” assessed at <http://www.covenantplayers.org/detailed-background-charles-m-tanner>.

³³ Unlike other TAF motion picture officers, Miller’s career remains somewhat of an enigma. Miller’s only known career lasts from 1953 to 1962. He began working at TAF-Tokyo as a motion picture specialist in 1953 and left the Foundation permanently in 1959 so as to pursue a ‘real world’ career in the movie business. Miller became an executive vice president in international marketing at Unitel Films International in New York City, and a year later moved to LA to work at Cinestar International in March 1962. There is no record whatsoever of John Miller after his relocation to LA. See Lee, “The Korean Film Industry.”

³⁴ Richard Butwell, *U Nu of Burma* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford U Press, 1963), 81.

³⁵ Michael Charney, “U Nu, China and the ‘Burmese’ Cold War: Propaganda in Burma in the 1950s,” in *The Cold War in Asia: The Battle for Hearts and Minds*, eds. Zheng Yangwen, Hong Liu, and Michael Szonyi, 41-58 (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2010), 50-53.

³⁶ A letter to Eric Johnston, March 16, 1954, Japan Writer Project H-7 1953-54 file, Box 9, AFR.

37 Richard P. Conlon, "Basic Position Paper TAF-Motion Picture Program," March 24, 1953, Japan Writer Project H-7 1953-54 file, Box 9, AFR.

³⁸ Richard P. Conlon was an officer in the U.S. Foreign Service in China, South Korea and Washington, leaving in 1952 to become Director of Plans for the Committee for Free Asia (CFA). In 1955, he left TAF and formed his own company Conlon Associates, as consultants to government and industry on international trade and investment in Asia.

39 Richard P. Conlon, "*Rebellion or People Win Through Showing*," July 29, 1953. Box 10, AFR.

40 Charney, "*U Nu, China and the 'Burmese' Cold War*," 49.

41 Richard Dyer MacCann, "To Counter Communist Propaganda," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 24, 1953.

42 A memorandum to Stewart, May 3, 1954, Movies General/Hollywood "for the record" file, Box 9, AFR.

43 A letter to Eric Johnston, March 16, 1954, Japan Writer Project H-7 1953-54 file, Box 9, AFR.

44 Blum proclaimed: "In the motion picture field, the communists usually attempt to gain control of movie industries through domination of key production, distribution and exhibition organizations. In line with our over-all organizational objectives, we try to create healthy, sound organizations within the Asian movie industries to prevent communist control." - "Executive Committee Report," May 5, 1954, Box 1, RBP.

45 A report to Noel Busch, November 24, 1952. Box 9, AFR.

46 Noel F. Busch, "Preliminary Notes on a Japan Moving Picture Program," June 5, 1953. Box 9, AFR.

⁴⁷ Miller, "Report on First Film Festival in Southeast Asia," May 31, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

⁴⁸ For more about Nagata, see Peter High, *The Imperial Screen: Japanese Film Culture in the Fifteen Years' War, 1931-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 314-321.

⁴⁹ *Report on the 3rd Annual Film Festival of Southeast Asia* (Hong Kong, 1956), 38.

50 Transcribed report of the First Conference of the FPA. All quotes in the section below are from the report unless otherwise indicated.

⁵¹ The Malay Film Production was established in 1939. By 1955, the studio had churned out over a hundred films mostly with local languages. Run Run Shaw, the youngest of the four patriarchs, Runje, Runde, Runme, and Run Run, had been managing the Malay Film Production until he took over his brother Runme's film production 'Shaw & Sons' in Hong Kong in the late 1950s. For more about the Malay Film Production, see Raphael Millet, *Singapore Cinema* (Editions Didier Millet, 2006); Jan Uhde and Yvonne Ng Uhde, *Latent Image: Film in Singapore* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

52 A letter to William T. Fleming, January 5, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

53 Busch, "Southeast Asian Federation of Motion Picture Producers," December 22, 1953, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

54 Busch, "Federation of Motion Picture Producers," January 8, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

55 A letter to Fleming January 5, 1954, AFR.

56 A letter to Blum, February 10, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

⁵⁷ Official Festival Brochure, *The First Film Festival in Southeast Asia* (Tokyo, 1954).

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- 58 A letter to Stewart from Robert B. Sheeks,” December 30, 1953, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.
- 59 A letter to Stewart from Robert B. Sheeks,” April 9, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR. Sheeks stressed, at the end of his letter to Stewart: “we treat our work with Hodge and this Festival as confidential.”
- 60 Chang Kuo-sin aimed to offset the communist domination of the Hong Kong media and helped stabilize the non-Communist portion of the industry by setting up a publishing house, a film production company, and an intellectual club. Asia Pictures, accordingly, was incorporated in July 1953 by taking over the existing Yung Hwa Company, and officially began producing films. See Law Kar and Frank Bren, *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross Cultural View* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2005), 156-57.
- 61 “Studio Publicity Directors Committee WE 3-7101 (Duke Wales),” Folder 149, Film Festivals P-Z, SCMHL.
- 62 Memorandum to James L. Stewart, April 26, 1954, Movies General/Hollywood “for the record” file, Box 9, AFR.
- ⁶³ Herve Dumont, *Frank Borzage: The Life and Film of a Hollywood Romantic*, trans. Jonathan Kaplansky (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland & Company, 2006), 342. Jing Jing Chang discusses Borzage’s penultimate film *China Doll* (1958), Chinese actress Li Lihua’s first Hollywood appearance, in her recent article “*China Doll* in Flight: Li Lihua, *World Today*, and the Free China-US Relationship,” *Film History* 26, no. 3 (2013): 1-28.
- 64 “Studio Publicity Directors Committee WE 3-7101 (Duke Wales),” Film Festivals P-Z, Folder 149, SCMHL.
- 65 Shochiku’s *The Garden of Women* (*Onna no sonno*, Kinoshita Keisuke, 1954), Daiei’s *The Golden Demon*, Shin Toho’s *The Grass-Cutters* (*Kusa wo karu musume*, Nakagawa Nobuo, 1954), Toho’s *Sound of the Mountain* (*Yama no oto*, Naruse Mikio, 1954), and Toei’s *Forsaken* (*Horoki*, Hisamatsu Seiji, 1954).
- 66 *Eiga Nenkan* (Tokyo: *Kinema Junpo-sha*, 1955), 54–60.
- ⁶⁷ Three films from Ceylon were: *Conquest in the Dry Zone*, *Children in Need*, and *Nelungama*. All produced by the Government of Ceylon’s Information Department. India’s entry was *Pamposhi* (Patel India Co.)
- 68 Usmar Ismail (1921-1971) is generally considered a father of Indonesian cinema. He co-founded Persari Film with Malik. As a director of *After the Curfew*, he was also known internationally for his film *Pedjuang* (*Fighters for Freedom*, 1961) which was entered into the 2nd Moscow International Film Festival.
- 69 The Indonesian delegates announced: “in view of the objections of the Indonesian government toward Indonesian-Japanese cooperation, even in the cultural field, pending the restoration of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries, they would not be able to take part in the Asian Film Festival.” Quoted in Miller’s letter to Blum, June 18, 1955, FMPPSEA 2nd file, Box 16, AFR.
- 70 “Big Five Film Companies Here Headed by Capable Leaders,” *Nippon Times*, May 16, 1954, sec. 7.
- 71 “Daiei Film Golden Demon Judged Best Asia Movie,” *Nippon Times*, May 20, 1954, sec. 1.
- 72 *Nippon Times*, May 20, 1954, sec. 2.
- ⁷³ Far East Film Company was organized in Bangkok in 1952 by R. D. Pestronji and a small-time Hollywood screenwriter Robert G. North.
- 74 *Kinema Junpo* (June 1954): 21.

75 Miller, "Report on First Film Festival in Southeast Asia," May 31, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

⁷⁶ Article 3 comprised of seven paragraphs: 1) films shall be classified into the dramatic and the non-dramatic categories; 2) the non-dramatic category includes the educational film, scientific film, documentary, cartoon, and cultural film; 3) films should be exhibited in the country of origin during the year preceding the year of the film festival; 4) films should not be exhibited at another international film festival; 5) the number of participating films from each country should not exceed five in each of the categories; 6) the film festival executive committee reserves the right to refuse participation of any film if it does not come up to the artistic or technical standards worthy of exhibition at the festival and/or hurt the national feeling of other countries; 6-B) Films of political and ideological propaganda shall not be eligible to participate in the film festival; 7) the dialogue should be dubbed in the language of the host country. - Transcribed report of "Federation of Motion Picture Producers of Southeast Asia."

77 Miller, "Report on First Film Festival in Southeast Asia."

78 Ibid.

79 A letter to Luraschi, June 16, 1954, The Japan Writer Project, Box 9, AFR.

80 Donald Richie and Joseph Anderson, *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry*, Expanded Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 232–233.

81 Charles Tanner, "Telephone Call to Duke Wales," June 30, 1954, The Japan Writer Project, Box 9, AFR.

82 "Rashomon Boom Spurred Film Industry and Opened a New Export Channel," *Asahi Evening News*, May 17, 1955, sec. B5.

⁸³ Richie and Anderson, *The Japanese Film*, 248.

⁸⁴ M. Chase, "Conversation with Irving Maas of MPPA," September 15, 1953, Box 9, AFR.

85 "Verbal Report –William A. Seiter," October 4, 1956, FMPPSEA 3rd, Box 18, AFR.

⁸⁶ John Miller, "Report on Second Film Festival in Southeast Asia, Singapore 1955," June 18, 1955, FMPPSEA 2nd file, Box 16, AFR.

⁸⁷ Cho, Tong-jae, "Report on the Korean Participation in the 4th Asian Film Festival," June 18, 1957, FMPPSEA 4th file Box 88, AFR.

⁸⁸ For more about the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' in the context of cinema, See Michael Basket, *The Attractive Empire: Colonial Asia in Japanese Imperial Film Culture, 1931-1953* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008); Poshek Fu, "Japanese Occupation, Shanghai Exiles, and Postwar Hong Kong Cinema," *The China Quarterly* 194 (June 2008): 380-394; Janine Hansen, "The New Earth: A German-Japanese Misalliance in Film," in *In Praise of Film Studies: Essays in Honor of Makino Mamoru*, eds. Aaron Gerow and Abe Mark Nornes (Yokohama and Ann Arbor: A Kinema Club Publication, 2001), 184-197; Brian Yecies and Ae-Gyung Shim, *Korea's Occupied Cinemas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

89 John F. Sullivan, "Asia Pictures," February 3, 1959, Box 171, AFR.

⁹⁰ See Lee, "Creating an Anti-Communist Motion Pictures' Network."

⁹¹ Miller, "Report on the First Film Festival in Southeast Asia," May 31, 1954, FMPPSEA 1st Japan file, Box 14, AFR.

⁹² *Report on the 3rd Annual Film Festival of Southeast Asia*, Hong Kong, June 12th-16th, 1956, 34.

⁹³ As a journalist, Busch wrote many books including *Briton Hadden: His Life and Time* (1949) and *The Horizon Concise History of Japan* (1972). His last book, *Winter Quarters: George Washington at Valley Forge* was published in 1974.

94 Kar and Bren, *Hong Kong Cinema*, 167.

95 Quoted in Yau, *The Shaw Screen*, 282.

⁹⁶ An anti-communist consensus, particularly in South Korea and Taiwan, was sustained under military regimes. For example, the Asian Film Festival in 1966, held in Seoul, ended in scandal when Yamamoto Satsuo, a socialist-inclined Japanese director, won the best director award for *Shonin no isu* (*The Burglar Story*, 1965). All of the Korean festival jurors, including committee chair Shin Sang-ok, were summoned to court and investigated for violation of an anti-communist law. The jurors were interrogated by the National Intelligence Service and told that the committee should have rejected the film completely and deported the ‘communist’ director Yamamoto. This rather absurd incident clearly shows how the region’s politics and ideological beliefs influenced regional film culture, even in the international cultural arena. In light of such incidents, the Asian Film Festival, I have written elsewhere, might be considered a vulnerable institution, and its identity has indeed changed several times due to the instability of the region’s political atmosphere. See Sangjoon Lee, “It’s ‘Oscar’ Time in Asia: The Rise and Demise of the Asia-Pacific Film Festival, 1954-1972,” in *Coming Soon To a Festival Near You: Programming Film Festivals*, ed. Jeffrey Ruoff, 173-187 (St. Andrews, UK: St. Andrews Film Studies, 2012), 179.

⁹⁷ See *Third Meeting of the ASEAN Sub-Committee on Film: Official Report* (Jakarta, Indonesia: November 1974).

⁹⁸ At this point, film festivals in Asia entered a new phase. In 1978, with support from the Government Information Office, Taiwan launched its own ‘Pan-Chinese’ film competition, the Golden Harvest Awards. And a year earlier, the Hong Kong International Film Festival became Asia’s first film festival devoted not to the commercial interests of the industry but to cinema as film culture and art. After Hong Kong’s notable success as a showcase of Asian cinema, Japan initiated its own prestigious international film festival, led by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). The ministry had been preparing for Tsukuba Expo, Japan’s third world’s fair after Expo ’70 in Osaka and Expo ’75 in Okinawa. To take advantage of potential synergies, the Tokyo International Film Festival was planned for 1985. Although Nagata passed away a few months before the festival, film industry moguls took charge of the festival committee, just as they had for the Asian Film Festival in the 1950s. The collective intention of government and industry, however, was fundamentally different from what it had been in the past. From its inception, Tokyo aimed to project itself as an international film festival comparable to Cannes and Venice, and not necessarily limited to Asian cinema. In spite of its promising start, however, Tokyo failed to establish itself as a world-class event. Its status rapidly faded after the entrance of the Busan (Pusan) International Film Festival in 1996.

⁹⁹ The 57th event was scheduled to be held in Bangkok in December 2014. However, having been postponed twice, no further information is available on the festival at the time of writing this article.

¹⁰⁰ Marselli Sumarno, “Asia-Pacific Film Festival in Jakarta,” *Variety* July 17 1995.

¹⁰¹ *Asia-Pacific Film Festival 50th Anniversary Catalogue* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Ministry of Culture, 2005).
