

REPORT

36th Southeast Asia Seminar (2012)
“Cities and Cultures in Southeast Asia”
20-23 November 2012
College of Architecture and Fine Arts Theater
University of San Carlos
Cebu, Philippines

CSEAS Southeast Asia Seminar committee members: Caroline Hau (Chair), Hayami Yoko, Jafar Suryomenggolo, Morishita Akiko, Loh Kah Seng, Mario Lopez, Nathan Badenoch

University of San Carlos counterpart: Dr. Hope Sabanpan-Yu, Director, Cebuano Studies Center

Total number of applications (excluding San Carlos applications, which were vetted by Cebuano Studies Center): 343. Nineteen candidates were chosen from the application, but one could not attend.

Total number of participants: 27 people of 12 nationalities (Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, South Korea, United Kingdom, Denmark)

Budget (CSEAS): JPY 4,459,215

Funding provided by: Gaisan Life and Green research program, Asian Core, and University of San Carlos

1. Format follows the one set by the 2011 Southeast Asia Seminar in Mae Sai, Thailand. This format consists of: lectures and discussion in the morning, followed by breakout group sessions in the early afternoon, and group presentations in the late afternoon. For the group presentations, each group made an outline or diagram or drawing on Manila paper (limited to two pieces of paper per group per day), which was then taped to the board for the group presentations.

2. Online applications were announced in late June 2012, with a deadline of August 1. Final candidates were selected by August 9.
3. Notes on the seminar:
 - a. The rooms for breakout group sessions were scattered throughout the building, so the sessions were not visible as a whole.
 - b. The cooperation of the co-organizer/counterpart is quite crucial to the success of the seminar, so we recommend that the chair of next year's committee should meet with the co-organizer before the seminar to discuss the details and logistics of the seminar. In our case, Hau and Jafar came two days earlier (November 18) and had a chance to view the venue and go over the details of the seminar with the organizer. This enabled last-minute arrangements were made, such as moving the venue to a smaller theater, making Manila paper available for participants to draw or outline their presentations on.
 - c. The committee came up with the questions for group discussions instead of asking the speakers to provide the questions. One lesson we learned from this seminar is that we should formulate questions that encourage description rather than prescription, i.e., questions that enable participants to share specific experiences and information, rather than take sides in an argument or offer only abstract or general points about what should be done.
 - d. Age of participants should be a factor in choosing the final candidates. Older participants tend to dominate discussion.
 - e. To get the participants more fully involved, we made it a rule that those who already spoke during the presentation should let other group members speak up.
 - f. There is a suggestion for future seminars to encourage participants to make posters of their own research interests or projects that have a bearing on the theme of the seminar, and bring these posters with them to make short presentations at the workshop.