

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

AR2221 – HISTORY & THEORY OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHITECTURE

(SEMESTER I: 2014-2015)

TIME ALLOWED – 2 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Please write your Student Number only. Do not write your name.
2. The examination paper consists of **FIVE (5)** questions and comprises **FOUR (4)** printed pages.
3. Candidates must choose and **ANSWER FOUR (4)** questions out of the five questions.
4. Provide **freehand sketches with annotations** where required or necessary. The use of diagrams is encouraged wherever it is appropriate.
5. Each question carries 25 marks and will constitute 50% of your overall grade.
6. This is an **OPEN BOOK** assessment.

QUESTION 1 (25 marks)

The term '**vernacular**' is usually used to refer to architecture that not produced by professional architects.

- 1a. Define the term 'vernacular architecture', both as a category of architecture and as approaches applied to the study of architectural traditions. (3 marks)
- 1b. Name and define the characteristics of the THREE broad **physical types** of Southeast Asia's vernacular house traditions. For EACH type, discuss ONE house tradition in terms of roof form, column positions, construction, and how the houses can be expanded or elaborated upon. Provide simple diagrams and annotate them. (12 marks)
- 1c. Describe TWO examples of **contemporary approaches** to architecture in Southeast Asia where architects have adopted vernacular architecture strategies as a response against globally-dominant or neo-liberal models of architectural production. Identify which of any of the following aspects your examples demonstrate: building culture / material practice / community and the everyday / a new relationship to tradition. (10 marks)

QUESTION 2 (25 marks)

Southeast Asian Indic temples express ideas from Hindu, Buddhist, and local cosmological belief systems.

- 2a. State THREE basic **cosmological ideas** that are present in Southeast Asia's Indic classical architecture. (3 marks)
- 2b. Describe THREE different Southeast Asian Indic temples and identify the combinations of **architectural types** in each of these temples. Explain how cosmological ideas are expressed through these combinations of forms. Provide simple diagrams and annotate them. (12 marks)
- 2c. Identify and discuss ONE example EACH of (i) associationist architecture (late colonial period) and (ii) regionalist architecture (post-independence/nationalist period) that have each used Indic architectural features as a marker of identity in modern architecture. For each example, identify whether the reference to Indic architecture is symbolic (through concept or layout, etc.) or literal (through form imitation). (10 marks)

QUESTION 3 (25 marks)

The layout and socio-cultural diversity of **Southeast Asia's cities** have undergone transformations from the early modern period to the colonial period to the situation today.

- 3a. Compare and differentiate the **THREE main Southeast Asian urban traditions** in terms of their city layout (urban morphology), landscape characteristics (on land, on water), and key architectural landmarks. Provide simple diagrams and annotate them. (9 marks)
- 3b. Some of the features you have described in part (a) of this question still be found in Southeast Asian cities today. Refer to **TWO** examples that show **where these features are still in existence** and discuss their current situation. (8 marks)
- 3c. Identify and describe **TWO** examples of Southeast Asian cities which were transformed into **European colonial cities** in the 17th to 18th centuries (ie 1600s to 1700s). Discuss the new ideas about city layout that were applied to transform these cities. Provide simple diagrams and annotate them. (8 marks)

QUESTION 4 (25 marks)

Traditions change over time. This is illustrated by Southeast Asia's **post-classical architecture** in the early modern period, and by traditions of **urban vernacular architecture** in the region's cities.

- 4a. Describe **TWO** examples of **post-classical religious architecture** in Southeast Asia – whether Islamic or Theravada Buddhist – and explain how their characteristics are derived from, and yet have transformed Southeast Asia's classical Indic traditions. (10 marks)
- 4b. Traditions change in response to its living context or *milieu*; conversely, the freeze-frame or *tableau* of historical forms characterises 'hyper-tradition'.
 - (i) Describe **ONE** example of an **urban vernacular architectural tradition** that has changed over time and explain the changes with respect to its living context. (5 marks)
 - (ii) Describe **ONE** example of a **hyper-traditional project** that has portrayed, recreated, or invented architectural tradition as static or unchanging, and explain what this display was intended for. (5 marks)
- 4c. Despite the above histories of transformation, tradition has instead been cast as **unchanging or static**. Explain how the notion that traditions are static and identity is unchanging have been shaped by **BOTH European intellectual contexts AND Southeast Asian colonialism**. (5 marks)

QUESTION 5 (25 marks)

Modern architecture developed new forms to express new materials and technologies – but precisely how form should express **context** has also been debated.

- 5a. Describe TWO examples of **regionalism** in architecture that demonstrate responses to local conditions, either through the notion of 'climate' or 'culture'. (10 marks)
- 5b. Identify and describe ONE example EACH of how **national identity** was expressed through (i) modern and (ii) neo-traditional forms. Explain how these architectural projects were shaped by the aesthetic dictates of the **political regimes** that were in power in the respective Southeast Asian countries at their time of construction. (10 marks)
- 5c. Define the post-Romantic binary notions of universal civilisation versus local culture and explain how such assumptions are linked to ideas about “national identity” or “regionalism” in modern Southeast Asian architecture. (5 marks)

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