

International Conference

Osamu Kozan
CSEAS Associate Professor

Session 3: "Water Resource is a driving force for social change"

Session 3 discussed the impact of water resources on human society and social change. All four speakers examined the connections between water resources and “humansphere” in their research target areas.

The first speaker Prof. Kenneth Pomerantz from University of California, Irvine, a modern historian of China, explained the unbalanced spatial distribution of water resources in China and India. He looked at the interlocking forces behind planned and actual Himalayan mega-projects, with special attention to China, which is the most important single actor in this critical situation.

The second speaker Dr. Shinjiro Kanae from Tokyo Institute of Technology, a hydrologist, discussed the sustainability of global water resources using advanced hydrological modeling. He assessed the sufficiency of global water resources by calculating the ratio between water withdrawal and water availability throughout the world. He concluded that criteria for evaluating sustainability remain an unsolved issue, partly because we should consider the ethical aspects such as how much is the minimum amount of water to satisfy human needs.

The third presenter Dr. Fumiaki Inagaki, from Keio University, Tokyo, a political scientist of Central Asia, focused on the transition of water distribution framework in the Aral Sea Basin since 1960s. He showed the mechanisms of the water disputes through an analysis of the water management policy of Central Asia from the perspective of “path-dependency.”

The last presenter Prof. James Warren, from Murdoch University, Perth, a historian of South East Asia, examined the causes and consequences of food shortages and famine with respect to the relationship between climatic factors, namely El Niño events,

drought and disease, food scarcity, regional characteristics and social structure. He focused on the structural links between food shortages, Filipino peasant societies and the weather factor.