

Dissertation Workshop on

**CHALLENGES OF THE AGRARIAN TRANSITION IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA**

October 17-20, 2009

The Challenges of Agrarian Transition in Southeast Asia (ChATSEA) project invites applications from doctoral students and advanced Masters students to participate in an interdisciplinary Dissertation Workshop in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.



THE WORKSHOP

This workshop is intended for doctoral students and advanced MA students (write up stage) from any university whose dissertation projects engage with agrarian transitions in Southeast Asia. The purpose of the workshop is to encourage and assist post-graduate students who are just beginning work on these issues, as well as those who are further along in their projects. The format will involve intensive, collegial and open group discussion of the individual student projects, and with the theoretical and methodological issues which they raise.

The workshop will take place over three days immediately following the biennial conference of the Canadian Council for Southeast Asia Studies (http://www.yorku.ca/ycar/CCSEAS_conference/home.html) and will be held at a venue nearby Vancouver. It is planned that the workshop will begin with introductory dinner on Saturday October 17, and continues through lunch on Tuesday October 20, 2009. It will include a minimum of twelve students and several faculty members from a variety of disciplines and interdisciplinary fields. The costs of the workshop, meals, and accommodations will be covered by the CHATSEA project. Travel will be subsidized up to \$500 per participant.

AGRARIAN TRANSITIONS

The agrarian transition has been traditionally defined as a range of processes linked to the increased importance of the market economy, which are at work within the agricultural sector and affect the agricultural as well as the rest of the rural population. In broader terms, the agrarian transition refers to a larger societal transformation from an agrarian society - for which agriculture represents the central occupation, the most important source of income, and the largest proportion of the GDP - to one based increasingly on industrial production and services, while urbanization and livelihood changes proceed apace. Nowadays, this broader transformation is closely dependent on a country's inclusion in the world market.

Over the last twenty years, the literature on agrarian and rural relations in both the developed and the developing world has been marked by an explosion of innovative theoretical approaches, many of which

inspired in part by the analytical challenges posed by globalization. New research, on such topics as space and geography, identity, commodity chains, gender, agro-food systems, power and the production of knowledge, regulation and certification (both private and public), political ecology and various kinds of network theory, have brought about dramatic shifts in the way that central concepts such as the rural, the market, environment and development are understood. Southeast Asia has been one of the key areas where these new insights are developed.

At least six sets of processes at the core of the agrarian transition can be identified. These are: 1) agricultural intensification and territorial expansion, 2) market integration, 3) urbanization and industrialisation, 4) the dynamics of population growth and mobility; 5) intensification of regulation and 6) environmental change. In relation to each of these processes, there are different actors involved stimulating, experiencing, resisting, or regulating change. There are issues of livelihood to be considered, and the perennial question “who gains, who loses” from the trends underway. There is also the spatial dimension of change, as it unfolds in particular sites, across broad regions, and through processes that are often supra-national in scope.

FACILITATORS

The Dissertation workshop will be facilitated by faculty resource persons drawn from the ChATSEA project. These will include (among others): Rodolphe DeKoninck (University of Montreal), Philip Kelly (York University), Michael Leaf (University of British Columbia), Tania Li (University of Toronto), Sarah Turner (McGill University), Peter Vandergeest (York University).

ELIGIBILITY

This workshop is intended for masters or doctoral students whose dissertation projects deal with some aspect of agrarian transition in Southeast Asia. The purpose of the workshop is to encourage and assist doctoral students who are just beginning work on these issues, as well as those who are farther along in their projects, and for masters students who are at the write-up stage of their thesis. It will involve intensive discussion of the individual projects and also the larger theoretical and methodological issues that they raise. Possibilities for continuing networks among interested students and faculty will be explored.

Applicants should be enrolled full time in a masters or doctoral program. They must have drafted a dissertation research proposal, although it may not yet be approved by their committees. Applicants will need to prepare materials in advance of the meeting, namely reading and sending commentaries and questions on the proposals of other participants, to establish the basis for productive exchange.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications consist of three items:

1. A current curriculum vitae.
2. An 8 to 10 page double spaced dissertation proposal. Alternatively, if the work is well underway, an 8 to 10 page double spaced description of the specific issues being addressed, the intellectual approach, and the materials being studied. For candidates in the thesis write-up stage, a chapter can be submitted but should be supplemented by a short description of the whole thesis project to allow readers to grasp the context of your work.

3. Any requests for travel funding with a budget proposal

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 15, 2009

Application materials should be sent to the ChATSEA coordinators by email at [**chatseaworkshop@gmail.com**](mailto:chatseaworkshop@gmail.com)

Workshop participants will be selected on the content of the submitted projects, the potential for useful exchanges among them, and the benefits of including a wide range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches and intellectual traditions. Applicants will be informed whether or not they have been selected for the workshop by mid-July 2009.

For further information concerning the workshop and eligibility: please contact Andr anne Doyon at [**chatseaworkshop@gmail.com**](mailto:chatseaworkshop@gmail.com)