

[HKIHSS Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar \(Oct 11\): Chicheng Ma - Classical Worship and Modern Growth: The Shadow of the Sages](#)

Discussion published by Terrie Ip on Wednesday, October 5, 2022

Hong Kong Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar [via Zoom]

Classical Worship and Modern Growth: The Shadow of the Sages

Dr. Chicheng Ma

Faculty of Business and Economics
The University of Hong Kong

Date & Time: 11 October 2022 | 12:30 - 1:30 pm (HK Time)

Register

now:

https://hku.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AKD0KvpTQnymlZja_7oWbQ

Abstract

This paper examines how intellectual culture affects modern economic growth. The research context is historical China, where the learned class had been entrenched in the worship for classical wisdom for millennia before being introduced to Western industrialization in the mid-19th century. Drawing upon data across 269 prefectures, I document a reversal of (intellectual) fortune. In regions with more canonical scholars in the ancient time, local elite built more temples to worship their classical idols, fostering a stronger classicism in the intellectual circle. The classicism stifled the diffusion of modern knowledge and human capital and, consequently, inhibited industrial development in 1858 to 1927. In contrast, industrialization achieved sustained progress in regions without such holy scholastic history. The findings illuminate the importance of the 'cultural entrepreneurship', or the lack thereof, in shaping modern economic growth.

Citation: Terrie Ip. *HKIHSS Interdisciplinary Lunchtime Seminar (Oct 11): Chicheng Ma - Classical Worship and Modern Growth: The Shadow of the Sages*. H-Asia. 10-05-2022.

<https://networks.h-net.org/node/22055/discussions/11140725/hkihss-interdisciplinary-lunchtime-seminar-oct-11-chicheng-ma>

Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.

About the Speaker

Chicheng Ma is assistant professor of economics at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Hong Kong. Before joining HKU in 2017, Chicheng was associate professor of economics in Shandong University. He received his PhD in Social Science from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 2011. Chicheng's research interests are in development economics and economic history, focusing on the roles of historical culture, institutions, and human capital in the long-run economic and financial development.

About the Series

This series aims to introduce a wide range of cutting-edge research in various disciplines and areas.

Connect with us on: [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Youtube](#)