

## CEACOP seminar

# “Share and Rule (*gongzhi* 共治)”

## : Classic Confucian Discourses on Checks and Balances in Government

**Date: 28 October 2022**

**Time: 10:00 am (HKT)**

**Venue: Online (This talk will be held via ZOOM)**

**Speaker: Jaeyoon Song, McMaster University**



**Jaeyoon Song**  
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### Abstract

In medieval and late imperial China, a long line of classicists, historians, and thinkers (including renowned Neo-Confucian scholars) participated in the public forum of debates on major issues of statecraft. The three most important channels through which they expressed and developed their visions of politics were classical learning, historical studies, and memorial writing. By analyzing their enduring discourses on proper relations between 1) the central and local/regional governments (e.g., debates on the classic enfeoffment system [*fengjian* 封建]), 2) emperors and premiers (e.g., debates on sovereign-minister [*junchen* 君臣] relations), and 3) local autonomy and bureaucratic control (e.g., debates on government/people [*guanmin* 官民] relations), I will argue that these thinkers developed elaborate theories of checks (*xiangzhi* 相制) and balances (*xiangwei* 相維) in government. I will also reconstruct the widely shared political visions of these thinkers as the governing principle of "share and rule" (*gongzhi* 共治). Because they addressed tensions between these three relations and developed political theories of checks and balances in government, traditional Chinese thinkers and statesmen could contribute toward making the institutions of the most-enduring imperial system in world history.

### Short Biography

Jaeyoon Song (Ph.D, Harvard University) is an associate professor of history at McMaster University in Canada. His publications include *Traces of Grand Peace: Classics and State Activism in Imperial China* (Harvard University Press, 2015) and a trilogy in contemporary Chinese history: *A Sad China: The People's Democratic Dictatorship 1948-1964* (Seoul, Kachi, 2020), *A Sad China: The Great Cultural Rebellion 1964-1976* (Seoul: Kachi, 2022), and *A Sad China: Free People of the Continent, 1976 - Present* (forthcoming, 2023). Apart from his academic writings, Song also published *Yōshiko's Flags* (Quattro, 2018), an oral historical work of literature.

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