

CEACOP Speaker Series

The *Book of Lord Shang* 商君書: A Study in Social Engineering?



Speaker: **Professor Yuri Pines**

Date: **09 April 2021 (Fri)**

Time: **16:00 (HKT)**

Venue: **Zoom**



Yuri Pines

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Abstract

My talk focuses on one of the boldest ideas in the *Book of Lord Shang* 商君書, attributed to Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 BCE). The authors believe that society can be fully engineered according to the ruler's wishes. Skilful application of negative (merciless punishments) and positive (ranks of merit and the adjacent privileges) incentives will direct the entire population to the mutually related tasks of agriculture and warfare. The authors' insistence that the universally applied fair, transparent, and exclusive norms of socioeconomic advancement can motivate the population to do whatever the state desires merits attention beyond the specific case of the state of Qin.

Biography

Yuri Pines 尤銳 is Michael W. Lipson Professor of Asian Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research focuses on early Chinese political thought, traditional Chinese political culture, early Chinese historiography, history of pre-imperial (pre-221 BCE) China, and comparative studies of imperial formations worldwide. His monographs include *Zhou History Unearthed: The Bamboo Manuscript Xinian and Early Chinese Historiography* (2020); *The Book of Lord Shang: Apologetics of State Power in Early China* (2017); *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (2012); and *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (2009).

Enquiry and Registration

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