



# Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722-453 B.C.E.

*Yuri Pines*

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## **Foundations of Confucian Thought: Intellectual Life in the Chunqiu Period, 722-453 B.C.E.** Yuri Pines

This ambitious work focuses on the world of Chinese thought during the Chunqiu (Springs and Autumns) period (722-451 B.C.E.), the two and a half centuries directly preceding and partly overlapping the time of Confucius, China's single most influential thinker. Ideas developed by Chunqiu statesmen and thinkers formed the intellectual milieu of Confucius and his disciples and contributed directly to the intellectual flowering of the Zhanguo (Warring States) era (453-221 B.C.E.), the formative period of the Chinese intellectual tradition. This study is the first attempt to systematically reconstruct major intellectual trends in pre-Confucian China. Foundations of Confucian Thought is based on an exploration of the Zuo zhuan, the largest pre-imperial historical text. Relying on meticulous textual and linguistic analysis, Yuri Pines argues that hundreds of the speeches of Chunqiu statesmen recorded in the Zuo zhuan were not, as has been argued, invented by the compiler of the treatise but reproduced from earlier sources, thus making it an authentic reflection of the Chunqiu intellectual tradition. By tracing changes in ideas and concepts throughout the Chunqiu period, Pines reconstructs the dynamics of contemporary political and ethical discourse, distilling major intellectual impulses that Chunqiu thinkers bequeathed to their Zhanguo descendants.

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