



Competing Imperialisms in Northeast Asia, 1894-1953:  
*Contested Histories and Histories of Contestations* – CIRN2  
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Public Lecture :  
**Prof Chih Shih-yu**  
**National University Taiwan**

*Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2019, 5 pm*  
at 6 University Square ,  
Ground Floor, room 6

**Strategic De-essentialism as Decolonization:**  
**The Imperialist Discourse of East Asia in Taiwan**

The disappearing of reference to Yadong (Asia's or Asiatic East or 亞東), as opposed to East Asia (東亞), in Taiwan's post-WWII political history is a harbinger for the unavailing of decolonization in Taiwan. The Cold War, pertaining especially to the American intellectual intervention in the conceptualization of the world through the fault line of Containment, contributed greatly to the substitution of East Asia for Yadong. I will argue that Yadong is a geocultural lens while East Asia connotes strategic purposes of various kinds. The latter echoed the discourse of Great East Asian Sphere that colonial Japan relied on before and during WWII to justify colonialism as well as expansion. The familiar discourse of decolonization embedded in strategical essentialism reproduces the colonizing/colonized binary. I will re-theorize decolonization as a relational project. Empirically the intellectual demise of Yadong as a relational discourse came along with the proceeding of the Cold War. This indirectly testifies to the fate of decolonization in Taiwan.

