

Waseda Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies Colloquium Series

The Dragon in Search of Its Soul: The Past, the Present, and China's International Relations

Speaker: Dr. Yi Wang, University of Birmingham

Date: Thursday 16 July 2026

Time: 15:00-16:30

Venue: Room 710, Building 19, Waseda University



In this talk Dr. Yi Wang explains how the construction of collective memory in China affects its national identity and foreign relations. He examines historical writing and memory-making from the Republican era onwards, along with the process of identity formation and change. He offers a calibrated analysis of the relationship between past and present—one of connection, disruption, and a calculated reticence. Rather than following the mainstream argument that memory exerts a powerful influence on present-day international relations, Dr. Wang contends that China's national identity is inherently unsettled, and that the past shapes the present in a non-linear and ambiguous way. This perspective helps explain the volatile but resilient interaction between China and the West.

Organizer: Dr. Benjamin Ascione, Waseda University