

## Abstract

This thesis titled "The Status and Roles of the Yasukuni Shrine in Present-day Japan," aims to find the extent of the significance of the Yasukuni Shrine to Japan and the world community nowadays.

The hypothesis of this research is that the Yasukuni Shrine is not only a symbol representing the uniqueness of Japan and Shinto, but also involves significant political and national ideas which remain politicized issues in both domestic and international arenas.

The methodology applied in this thesis is documentary research and descriptive analysis. Information was gathered from books, academic analyses, articles published in the academic magazines and other electronic media, including news and reports concerning the Yasukuni Shrine from other sources in Thai, English and Japanese.

This research indicates that due to the complicated history of the Yasukuni Shrine and the role of Japan during World War II, the image of the Yasukuni Shrine carries many meanings. One is the symbol of patriotism and the unifying spirit of the Japanese. It is also the symbol of the nationalism and militarism of Japan in the past. Political factors, international relationships, and the social and economic changes in Japan after the war have influenced the status and role of the Yasukuni Shrine in many different ways. The relationship among the Yasukuni Shrine, Shinto, the nation and nationalism all create different arguments with different reasons. The dispute over the Yasukuni Shrine becomes a politicized issue whenever Japanese politicians pay official visits to the shrine, especially the Japanese Prime Minister, which brings up the question of whether the visit is unconstitutional or not. The main dispute comes from neighboring countries like China and South Korea, which seriously suffered from the previous Japanese aggression. Moreover, the present attitude of the Japanese leader makes the Yasukuni Shrine an issue which affects relations between Japan and its neighbors, which is an obstacle to developing the cooperation among the East Asian countries.