

Abstract

This research studies the contents of Japanese newspapers regarding Thailand during the Pacific War. Analyzing not only contents but also space, frequency, and language usage, it aims to grasp the implications of the presentation about Thailand, which the Japanese government wanted to do through newspapers.

My hypothesis is that the Japanese views on Thailand as expressed in newspapers reflects the importance of Thailand as an ally throughout the war. There was virtually no significant change on the Japanese views even though the situations had changed.

Employing two major newspapers, Yomiuri and Asahi, this research explores both "contents" and "the way they were presented," covering the wartime period from January 1941 to December 1945. Specifically, the number of coverage is totally 129 pieces, including news reports, editorials, event pictures, and interviews. The issues on Thailand covered in the Japanese newspapers can be classified into 8 categories, that is, 1) territorial disputes between Thailand and French Indochina, 2) the Japanese army's march to Thailand, 3) Thailand's war declaration toward the UK and the US, 4) Japan's granting of Malaya and Shan State to Thailand, 5) the East Asia Meeting, 6) the change of Thai Prime Minister, 7) The Free Thai Movement, and 8) the air raid on Thailand.

The research found that Japanese newspapers were used by the imperial government as a propoganda tool and as a tool to criticize the UK and the US. There was no news not supporting the Japanese government in both newspapers.

Japanese newspapers presented only one-sided news and distorted the fact by always portraying close alliance between Japan and Thailand. Although Thailand came be disillusioned with Japan and accordingly changed its stance, the newspapers ignored such development and even employed more wordings that displayed the alliance between Japan and Thailand. In sum, the image of close Japan-Thai alliance was shown in Japanese newspapers since the beginning until the end of the Pacific War.