

《日本靖国神社的真相》

日本靖国神社的真相

The Yasukuni Shrine is seen by many as a symbol of the country's past militarism. Neighboring countries that suffered under Japanese aggression during world war two say frequent visits to the shrine by Japanese leaders are offensive, and serve as a major obstacle in the way of mending the past. Let's look at the background to the controversial site.

The Yasukuni Shrine is in Chiyoda, in central Tokyo. It was originally created to commemorate those who died to bring about the Meiji Restoration of Imperial Rule in 1868.

It lists the names of military personnel killed while serving the country during armed conflicts.

Around 2 and a half million people are enshrined. They include 2.1 million who died during the Second World War.

But it's become a symbol of controversy, mainly because a number of internationally recognised war criminals are listed as martyrs. They include 14 Class-A war criminals. One is Hideki Tojo, Japanese Prime Minister for most of World War Two, who was hanged for war crimes in 1948.

The decision by Japanese officials to honor Class-A war criminals at the shrine was taken in 1969, but they kept the move secret. That news was only revealed to the media a decade later, on April the 19th, 1979.

Since then, several Japanese Prime Ministers have visited the shrine, including Yasuhiro Nakasone, Ryutaro Hashimoto, and Junichiro Koizumi .

Some Japanese commentators have called for the removal of the 14 Class-A war criminals from the shrine, as a means of ending the controversy. But Yasukuni's head priest says enshrinement is permanent and irreversible.