



Politics in America – Michael Henderson

One big thing I've noticed that is different between Japan and America is politics. Mainly, the difference in attitude people have towards politics and politicians in general. In America, almost everyone is political (政治に関心を持つ), and they are not afraid to say their point of view. People often make their political views (政見) an important part of their personality, which is why Americans are so passionate about current issues (現状の課題). But first, let's talk about the background of American politics!

In America, there are two main political parties (政党). Democrats, who have liberal (リベラル) views, and Republicans, who have conservative (コンサバ) views. These two parties hold almost every political position in America, and both parties constantly fight for power. Even if people's political views are a little different from these two parties, people often have no choice but to vote for these parties (その二つの政党のどちらかに投票するしかない). This is because the political system in America makes it difficult for other political parties to gain power. So, we often choose one of the two main parties that is closest to our views.

As for American citizens, we usually become political starting from high school age. Often students will talk about political issues with their friends in person or online, and often social studies classes will have debates where students can discuss their opinions (意見を交わす). This helps students and people realize the problems in their society that they can help fix.

However, this also has a negative side. It's quite common (よくある) to choose friends that have the same political views as you, as people will often stop talking to friends or even family members if their political views are too different. Because people have strong political identities, debates on politics can turn very nasty very quickly. However, overall, Americans believe that talking about issues is the only way to be able to solve them. Do you think so too?

Wedding Traditions – Katelyn Sondereker

Have you ever been to an American wedding? I usually go to a lot of weddings every year for my friends and family. But I think weddings in Japan and America are very different, so let's talk about them!

There are a lot of traditions (伝統) for American weddings. One is that the bride (花嫁) almost always wears a white dress with a veil (ベール). Usually, she spends a lot of time searching for the perfect dress with her friends and family. There is even a very dramatic (ドラマチックな) American TV show where people look for their perfect wedding dress called, *Say Yes to the Dress!*

Another tradition comes from an old English rhyme (韻文): *something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue*. The bride is supposed to have one **old** thing, one **new** thing, one **borrowed** thing, and one **blue** thing on her wedding day. For example, the bride could wear earrings from her mother (*something borrowed*) and blue shoes (*something blue*). If she has all four things, it will bring good luck and happiness to the new couple (夫婦).

In most weddings, the bride and groom (新郎) have friends and family that they want to participate in the wedding ceremony. Also, the bride has one person who she chooses to be the *maid of honor*, and the groom has one person who he chooses to be the *best man*. These are usually the people that the bride and groom are the closest (最も親しい人) to, so they help support them and plan the wedding.

Even though there are lots of common traditions, American weddings are usually unique to the people that are getting married. Of course, weddings have changed over time; in America, because people have fought for marriage equality (同性婚) men can marry men and women can marry women, so anyone can get married. This is a freedom (自由) that people do not have yet in Japan, but it is one that will hopefully continue to be protected (保護される) in America.

American Students Protesting

When high school students in America protest (抗議する) something, they will often do a “walk-out”. This means students will walk out of the school during classes and stand outside with signs while protesting. In this recent example, students are protesting against their state (州) passing an education bill (教育に関する議案を採択すること)



Students in Little Rock, Arkansas protesting against an education bill on March 3rd, 2023

Below are wedding pictures from when Kate's parents got married! What year do you think they got married? Take a guess! _____

