



Why do people join cults?

Today, there are thousands of cults around the world. What distinguishes cults from other groups? Why do people join cults?

The reason why I chose this topic…

Recently in Japan, ‘cults’ is a hot topic. Since prime minister Abe was killed several months ago, one religious group is drawing attention for its collision with politicians and also for its cultic state. In the situation like this, I became curious about what cults is and why people join cults. Let’s watch the video and think about cults and consider how we should see a recent situation in Japan.

Before watching the video

① Vocabulary

Check the meaning of the words

revelation congressional immortalize grizzly unsuspecting obedient
scrutiny devotion asset persuasive authoritarian streak susceptible
indoctrinate coercive discourage stunt milestone exploit

② What do you think the cults is? Just write down the knowledges or the impressions you have about cults.

Work with the video

video→https://www.ted.com/talks/janja_lalich_why_do_people_join_cults?subtitle=ja

① Watch the video and answer the questions below.

1. What does it mean to drink the Kool-Aid?

2. What are the basic characteristics of cults? Choose the wrong statement from below.
 - a. It requires a high level of commitment from its members.
 - b. It claims to provide answers to life's biggest questions such as love, happiness, death etc.
 - c. It has an original bible.
 - d. It uses both formal and informal systems of influence and control to keep members obedient.

② Read the statements below. Write T(true) or F(false). Then correct the false statements.

1. All cults are religious.

2. A cult leader is motivated by money, sex, fame or all three.

3. Cults' beliefs are protected under religious freedom no matter how strange these are.

After watching the video

① What do you think the cults is? Also compare to what you wrote in before watching the video part.

② Basically, cults group are permitted to exist under religious freedom. But when their practices involve harassment, threats, illegal activities, or abuse, the law can intervene. Considering this, how do you think the issues of one religious group in Japan? Do you think that group should be permitted or not?

Extend knowledge

Introduce you the iconic incident of cults group.



Mass murder suicide in Jonestown

On November 18, 1978, 909 men, women, and children died after being forced to drink poisoned Flavor Aid. They were members of the Peoples temples, which is a cultic religious group that Jim Jones established. In the beginning, the



group extended its influence in the U.S. But after the reality of the group such as brainwashing and abuse are exposed, he moved with several hundred of members to establish the commune of Jonestown in Guyana. In fact, Jonestown was like a prison camp. And when a congressional delegation went to Jonestown to investigate its conditions, Jim Jones let members to drink poisoned

Flavor Aid. That's how this tragedy happened. This incident shows how dangerous the cults is and still remains as the lesson of cults.