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## **Tycoon avoids prison over shares scam**

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**28 October, 2005**

## **THE ARTICLE**

### **Tycoon avoids prison over shares scam**

A Japanese court has given a strangely light sentence to a business tycoon who was once the world's richest man. Yoshiaki Tsutsumi was found guilty of insider trading and lying about his company's share records. Judge Tsutomu Tochigi said: "The impact on society of crimes by such leading Japanese companies is very serious". He then handed out a sentence that did not match the seriousness of the crime. He fined Mr. Tsutsumi just \$43,000 and sentenced him to 30 months in prison, suspended for four years. It is unlikely Tsutsumi will serve any of that time.

Tsutsumi's fall from grace has been swift. However, he does not prove the saying, "the bigger they are, the harder they fall," judging from his light court sentencing. Tsutsumi is the former chairman of Kokudo Corporation, which controls holdings in a railway group, construction, hotels, resorts and a baseball team. He is one of Japan's most powerful businessmen. He also has close connections to many of Japan's leading politicians. In September 2004, Tsutsumi sold shares from his shady dealings and lined his own pockets with \$180,000,000. His court fine is chicken feed in comparison.

## WARM-UPS

**1. BUSINESS PERSON:** Choose a person from the world of business. You are now that person. Walk around the class meeting the other "business people". Introduce yourselves and chat about your lives, business and current projects. What do you like about the business world?

**2. FAMOUS TYCOONS:** Below is a list of famous tycoons. What do you know about them? Walk around the class and ask other students about them. After you have finished, sit down and share your findings. What interesting things did you find out?

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Bill Gates (Microsoft)    | • Mohamed Al Fayed (Harrods)        |
| • Richard Branson (Virgin)  | • Roman Abramovich (Chelsea FC)     |
| • Anita Roddick (Body Shop) | • Martha Stewart (lifestyle guru)   |
| • Hugh Hefner (Playboy)     | • Yoshiaki Tsutsumi (Industrialist) |

**3. CHAT:** In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

*Japanese courts / court sentences / rich people / lying / shares / financial crimes / prison / company chairmen / railways / political connections / chickens*

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

**4. TYCOON:** Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "tycoon". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

**5. SECRETS:** What are the secrets to success? How do you become a business tycoon? In pairs / groups, talk about how important you think the following are. Rank them in order of most important to become a tycoon.

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ___ Coming from a rich family  | ___ Being in the right place at the right time |
| ___ Elite university education | ___ Entrepreneurial genius                     |
| ___ Ideas                      | ___ Being ruthless                             |
| ___ Hard work                  | ___ Luck                                       |
| ___ Ability to lie             | ___ Ambition                                   |

**6. QUICK DEBATE:** Students A think a business tycoon whose illegal actions gave him \$180,000,000 should go to prison. Students B strongly believe business leaders should not go to prison for lying about the financial affairs of their companies. Change partners often.

## BEFORE READING / LISTENING

**1. TRUE / FALSE:** Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| a. A business tycoon paid a gang to help him escape from a prison.        | T / F |
| b. The world's former richest man has been found guilty of fraud.         | T / F |
| c. The tycoon received a huge fine and long prison sentence.              | T / F |
| d. The tycoon will probably spend no time in prison.                      | T / F |
| e. The tycoon proves that "the bigger they are, the harder they fall".    | T / F |
| f. The tycoon was a famous baseball star.                                 | T / F |
| g. His close connections to many leading politicians helped him in court. | T / F |
| h. He now wants to feed chickens.   | T / F |

**2. SYNONYM MATCH:** Match the following synonyms from the article:

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| a. strangely       | delayed   |
| b. light           | stakes    |
| c. handed          | do        |
| d. suspended       | downfall  |
| e. serve           | lenient   |
| f. fall from grace | quick     |
| g. swift           | links     |
| h. holdings        | unusually |
| i. connections     | peanuts   |
| j. chicken feed    | gave      |

**3. PHRASE MATCH:** Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. A Japanese court has given a   | Japan's leading politicians        |
| b. a business tycoon who was once | match the seriousness of the crime |
| c. found guilty of insider        | the harder they fall               |
| d. a sentence that did not        | the world's richest man            |
| e. 30 months in prison,           | from grace                         |
| f. fall                           | in a railway group                 |
| g. the bigger they are,           | strangely light sentence           |
| h. holdings                       | his own pockets                    |
| i. close connections to many of   | trading                            |
| j. lined                          | suspended for four years           |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

**WHICH WORD?** Strike through the incorrect choice in each of pair of *italicized* words.

### **Tycoon avoids prison over shares scam**

A Japanese court has given a *strangely* / *strongly* light sentence to a business tycoon who was once the world's richest man. Yoshiaki Tsutsumi *was found* / *lost* guilty of *insider* / *outsider* trading and lying about his company's share records. Judge Tsutomu Tochigi said: "The impact on society of crimes by such *leading* / *loading* Japanese companies is very serious". He then handed out a sentence that did not *match* / *game* the seriousness of the crime. He fined Mr. Tsutsumi just \$43,000 and sentenced him to 30 months in prison, suspended for four years. It is unlikely Tsutsumi will *service* / *serve* any of that time.

Tsutsumi's fall from *grace* / *brace* has been swift. However, he does not prove the saying, "the bigger they are, the *harder* / *bigger* they fall," judging from his *light* / *heavy* court sentencing. Tsutsumi is the former chairman of Kokudo Corporation, which controls *holdings* / *hands* in a railway group, construction, hotels, resorts and a baseball team. He is one of Japan's most powerful businessmen. He also has close connections to many of Japan's leading politicians. In September 2004, Tsutsumi sold shares from his shady dealings and *lined* / *fined* his own pockets with \$180,000,000. His court fine is *peanuts* / *chicken* feed in comparison.

## **LISTENING**

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### **Tycoon avoids prison over shares scam**

A Japanese court has given a \_\_\_\_\_ light sentence to a business tycoon who was once the world's richest man. Yoshiaki Tsutsumi was \_\_\_\_\_ guilty of insider trading and \_\_\_\_\_ about his company's share records. Judge Tsutomu Tochigi said: "The \_\_\_\_\_ on society of crimes by such leading Japanese companies is very serious". He then handed out a sentence that did not match the seriousness of the crime. He \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Tsutsumi just \$43,000 and sentenced him to 30 months in prison, \_\_\_\_\_ for four years. It is unlikely Tsutsumi will \_\_\_\_\_ any of that time.

Tsutsumi's fall from \_\_\_\_\_ has been swift. However, he does not \_\_\_\_\_ the saying, "the bigger they are, the harder they fall," judging from his light court sentencing. Tsutsumi is the former chairman of Kokudo Corporation, which controls \_\_\_\_\_ in a railway group, construction, hotels, resorts and a baseball team. He is one of Japan's most powerful businessmen. He also has close \_\_\_\_\_ to many of Japan's leading politicians. In September 2004, Tsutsumi sold shares from his shady dealings and \_\_\_\_\_ his own pockets with \$180,000,000. His court fine is chicken \_\_\_\_\_ in comparison.

## **AFTER READING / LISTENING**

**1. WORD SEARCH:** Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**fall**' and '**grace**'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS:** Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

**3. WHICH WORD?** In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

**4. VOCABULARY:** Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

**5. STUDENT "FRAUD" SURVEY:** In pairs / groups, write down questions about business fraud and suitable punishments.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

**6. TEST EACH OTHER:** Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- |             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| • strangely | • grace        |
| • found     | • harder       |
| • impact    | • holdings     |
| • handed    | • close        |
| • fined     | • lined        |
| • serve     | • chicken feed |

## **DISCUSSION**

### STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What are feelings towards the light sentence?
- c. What sentence would you have given Mr. Tsutsumi?
- d. Do you think rich and famous people always receive lighter sentences?
- e. Do you think rich and famous people should receive lighter sentences?
- f. Do you think the judge's words matched his sentencing?
- g. How do you think Mr. Tsutsumi feels about the sentencing?
- h. What sentence would Mr. Tsutsumi get in your country?
- i. What famous fraud cases have taken place in your country?
- j. Do you prefer chicken or peanuts?

### STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. How serious do you think insider trading and lying about company records are?
- d. What impact does fraud have on society?
- e. Do you think fraudsters are serious criminals?
- f. Do you think the \$43,000 fine is chicken feed?
- g. What message might the light court sentence give to other business people who are thinking about doing something illegal?
- h. If an ordinary person committed a major fraud, do you think they would also receive such a light sentence?
- i. Do you agree with the saying, "the bigger they are, the harder they fall"?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

**AFTER DISCUSSION:** Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?



## **SPEAKING**

**FRAUD:** You are part of a new committee to decide on sentencing rules for fraud. In pairs / groups, write how serious you think the fraud is in the middle column and your punishments in the right hand column.

FRAUD	SERIOUSNESS	PUNISHMENT
Corporate accounting scandals		
Credit card fraud		
False advertising		
Identity theft		
Forgery of documents or signatures		
Phishing		

Change partners and compare and discuss your ideas.

Decide together on ways of protecting against or reducing fraud.

Give a presentation on your points to the rest of the class. Vote on the best one.

## **HOMEWORK**

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. INTERNET:** Search the Internet and find more information on famous frauds. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

**3. FRAUD:** Make a poster describing one kind of fraud. Write down some actions that could reduce it. Show your posters to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write similar things?

**4. LETTER:** You are a prisoner serving a five-year prison sentence for a not-too-serious fraud. Write a letter to the judge in the Tsutsumi case and tell him what you think of the suspended sentence. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

## ANSWERS

### TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F      b. T      c. F      d. T      e. F      f. F      g. ?      h. F

### SYNONYM MATCH:

- |                    |           |
|--------------------|-----------|
| a. strangely       | unusually |
| b. light           | lenient   |
| c. handed          | gave      |
| d. suspended       | delayed   |
| e. serve           | do        |
| f. fall from grace | downfall  |
| g. swift           | quick     |
| h. holdings        | stakes    |
| i. connections     | links     |
| j. chicken feed    | peanuts   |

### PHRASE MATCH:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a. A Japanese court has given a   | strangely light sentence           |
| b. a business tycoon who was once | the world's richest man            |
| c. found guilty of insider        | trading                            |
| d. a sentence that did not        | match the seriousness of the crime |
| e. 30 months in prison,           | suspended for four years           |
| f. fall                           | from grace                         |
| g. the bigger they are,           | the harder they fall               |
| h. holdings                       | in a railway group                 |
| i. close connections to many of   | Japan's leading politicians        |
| j. lined                          | his own pockets                    |

### WHICH WORD?

#### Tycoon avoids prison over shares scam

A Japanese court has given a *strangely* / ~~strongly~~ light sentence to a business tycoon who was once the world's richest man. Yoshiaki Tsutsumi *was found* / ~~lost~~ guilty of *insider* / ~~outsider~~ trading and lying about his company's share records. Judge Tsutomu Tochigi said: "The impact on society of crimes by such *leading* / ~~loading~~ Japanese companies is very serious". He then handed out a sentence that did not *match* / ~~game~~ the seriousness of the crime. He fined Mr. Tsutsumi just \$43,000 and sentenced him to 30 months in prison, suspended for four years. It is unlikely Tsutsumi will ~~service~~ / *serve* any of that time.

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