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US Supreme Court OKs drug tea

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23 February, 2006

THE ARTICLE

US Supreme Court OKs drug tea

America's top court decided yesterday to allow a small religious group to use a tea containing an illegal drug. The decision has surprised many Americans. The 130 followers of a Brazilian sect argued it used the tea containing the banned substance in its rituals. Officials from President George W. Bush's government claimed the use of the tea drug went against US drug laws and wanted the tea banned. Chief Justice John Roberts said the government did not show that the sect was doing any harm in using the tea. The decision is a victory for religious freedom. The holy tea brings its users closer to God.

The defence team argued that America's strict drug laws could not be used to ban the tea. Lawyers argued the chemical in it was not being abused in a way an illegal drug might be. The Government's lawyers agreed that the tea was part of a "sincere exercise of religion". They also said there was a danger of the tea being used for illegal purposes. Chief Justice Roberts said his decision would not open the way for other groups to try and get particular drugs legalized. The sect was not totally happy with the court victory as customs officials seized cases of their holy tea after the decision.

WARM-UPS

1. RELIGIOUS RITUALS: In pairs / groups, talk about religious rituals. What do you do as part of your religion? What is the meaning of the rituals? What would you think if your government tried to ban them?

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

Courts / religious sects / tea / rituals / drugs / freedom / harm / being close to God / bans / chemical substances / lawyers / decisions / victories / customs officials

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

3. ROLE PLAY: Role play a discussion between a follower of the religion that wants to use the mind-changing tea and a member of society who is against drugs of any kind.

4. TEA ROLES: In pairs / groups, discuss the following topics related to tea:

- a. The importance of tea to me.
- b. The part tea plays in my life.
- c. The history of tea in my country.
- d. Tea and health.
- e. Teas around the world.
- f. Tea-drinking habits.
- g. Tea or coffee?
- h. English tea, milk tea, iced tea....

Change partners and share what you talked about.

5. DRUG TEA OPINIONS: What do you think about these opinions? Students A agree with them, Students B disagree.

- a. It is right that the sect can use the tea in their religion.
- b. The law is the law. An illegal drug should not be used for any purposes.
- c. If people can use this tea, then people should be able to use marijuana.
- d. Anyone who takes a mind-changing drug could commit a serious crime.
- e. America is great for allowing such religious freedom.
- f. The religion will see a great increase in followers from now.
- g. Members from the religion will sell the drug to make money illegally.
- h. The court victory means little because customs officials won't allow the tea into the country.

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

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. The top US court has allowed a religion to use a drug tea. | T / F |
| b. There are just 130 of the religion's followers in the United States. | T / F |
| c. A top judge said the tea was very harmful. | T / F |
| d. Followers say the tea brings people closer to God. | T / F |
| e. The religious group does not use the drug tea in an illegal way. | T / F |
| f. Prosecution lawyers agreed that the drug was being used sincerely. | T / F |
| g. A top judge said his decision would open the way for other drugs. | T / F |
| h. Customs officials let 280 kg of the tea into the USA after the ruling. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| a. decided | ceremonies |
| b. illegal | group |
| c. sect | genuine |
| d. rituals | insisted |
| e. victory | certain |
| f. argued | ruled |
| g. abused | held |
| h. sincere | triumph |
| i. particular | mistreated |
| j. seized | banned |

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

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| a. allow a small religious group to use | its users closer to God |
| b. it used the tea containing the | of religion |
| c. the use of the tea drug went | not be used to ban the tea |
| d. The decision is a victory | and get particular drugs legalized |
| e. The holy tea brings | a tea containing an illegal drug |
| f. America's strict drug laws could | banned substance in its rituals |
| g. abused in a way | for religious freedom |
| h. sincere exercise | an illegal drug might be |
| i. open the way for other groups to try | cases of their holy tea |
| j. customs officials seized | against US drug laws |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

US Supreme Court OKs drug tea

America's _____ court decided yesterday to allow a small religious group to use a tea containing an illegal drug. The decision has _____ many Americans. The 130 followers of a Brazilian sect _____ it used the tea containing the _____ substance in its rituals. Officials from President George W. Bush's government claimed the use of the tea drug went _____ US drug laws and wanted the tea banned. Chief Justice John Roberts said the government did not show that the sect was doing any _____ in using the tea. The decision is a _____ for religious freedom. The holy tea brings its _____ closer to God.

banned
argued
users
top
harm
against
victory
surprised

The defence team _____ that America's strict drug laws could not be used to _____ the tea. Lawyers argued the chemical in it was not being abused in a way an _____ drug might be. The Government's lawyers agreed that the tea was part of a "_____ exercise of religion". They also said there was a _____ of the tea being used for illegal purposes. Chief Justice Roberts said his decision would not _____ the way for other groups to try and get particular drugs legalized. The sect was not totally _____ with the court victory as customs officials seized cases of their _____ tea after the decision.

danger
ban
holy
sincere
open
argued
happy
illegal

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

US Supreme Court OKs drug tea

America's top court decided yesterday to _____ a small religious group to use a tea containing an illegal drug. The decision has surprised many Americans. The 130 _____ of a Brazilian sect argued it used the tea containing the banned _____ in its rituals. Officials from President George W. Bush's government _____ the use of the tea drug went against US drug laws and wanted the tea banned. Chief Justice John Roberts said the government did not show that the sect was doing any _____ in using the tea. The decision is a _____ for religious freedom. The holy tea brings its users closer to God.

The defence team _____ that America's strict drug laws could not be used to ban the tea. Lawyers argued the chemical in it was not being _____ in a way an illegal drug might be. The Government's lawyers agreed that the tea was part of a "_____ exercise of religion". They also said there was a danger of the tea being used for illegal purposes. Chief Justice Roberts said his _____ would not open the way for other groups to try and get particular drugs legalized. The _____ was not totally happy with the court victory as customs officials _____ cases of their holy tea after the decision.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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. GAP FILL: 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 "DRUGS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about drugs and tea.

- 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:

- top
- surprised
- substance
- against
- harm
- closer
- defence
- illegal
- sincere
- danger
- totally
- holy

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Do you think this case is just a storm in a teacup?
- c. Are you surprised the US Supreme Court has allowed the sect to use the drug tea?
- d. Would you like to try the tea?
- e. Do you think the decision will anger people who want to use marijuana for medical purposes?
- f. Do you think a law that says "anything goes" for religious freedom is a good law?
- g. What do you think the Supreme Court would do if a religious sect wanted to use cocaine or heroin as a "sincere exercise of religion"?
- h. Do you think America is a model of religious tolerance?
- i. What do you think would happen if the sect suddenly had millions of followers?
- j. Do you think mind-changing drugs should be allowed as part of a religion?

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. Do you think a banned drug in a religion causes problems for society?
- d. Do you think all drugs can bring people closer to God?
- e. Do you think the drug tea could be used by other parts of society?
- f. Do you think other drug cases will be brought before America's courts?
- g. How do you think the religious sect will be able to practice its religion if US customs do not allow the tea into the country?
- h. Are there aspects of religion that you think could be illegal?
- i. Do you think other drugs should be legalized or made illegal?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

DRUGS: In pairs / groups, talk about the pros and cons of the following drugs in society.

	PROS	CONS
Hallucinogenic tea		
Alcohol		
Marijuana		
Nicotine		
Morphine		
Caffeine		
Other _____		

Change partners / groups. Tell each other what your previous partner(s) said.
Decide which of the above drugs you would allow or ban in your society.

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 information about the hallucinogenic tea. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. TEA: Make a poster about all the different kinds of teas in the world. Describe the important role tea plays in various cultures. Show your poster to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone find out similar things?

4. EFFECTS: Write an essay on the effects of allowing the mind-changing tea to become a legal part of the religious sect's practices. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. decided	ruled
b. illegal	banned
c. sect	group
d. rituals	ceremonies
e. victory	triumph
f. argued	insisted
g. abused	mistreated
h. sincere	genuine
i. particular	certain
j. seized	held

PHRASE MATCH:

a. allow a small religious group to use	a tea containing an illegal drug
b. it used the tea containing the	banned substance in its rituals
c. the use of the tea drug went	against US drug laws
d. The decision is a victory	for religious freedom
e. The holy tea brings	its users closer to God
f. America's strict drug laws could	not be used to ban the tea
g. abused in a way	an illegal drug might be
h. sincere exercise	of religion
i. open the way for other groups to try	and get particular drugs legalized
j. customs officials seized	cases of their holy tea

GAP FILL:

US Supreme Court OKs drug tea

America's **top** court decided yesterday to allow a small religious group to use a tea containing an illegal drug. The decision has **surprised** many Americans. The 130 followers of a Brazilian sect **argued** it used the tea containing the **banned** substance in its rituals. Officials from President George W. Bush's government claimed the use of the tea drug went **against** US drug laws and wanted the tea banned. Chief Justice John Roberts said the government did not show that the sect was doing any **harm** in using the tea. The decision is a **victory** for religious freedom. The holy tea brings its **users** closer to God.

The defence team **argued** that America's strict drug laws could not be used to **ban** the tea. Lawyers argued the chemical in it was not being abused in a way an **illegal** drug might be. The Government's lawyers agreed that the tea was part of a "**sincere** exercise of religion". They also said there was a **danger** of the tea being used for illegal purposes. Chief Justice Roberts said his decision would not **open** the way for other groups to try and get particular drugs legalized. The sect was not totally **happy** with the court victory as customs officials seized cases of their **holy** tea after the decision.