

The Indian Penal Code 1860

Section 378 - THEFT Whoever, intending to take dishonestly any moveable property out of the possession of any person without that

a) A cuts down a tree on Z's ground, with the intention of dishonestly taking the tree out of Z's possession without Z's consent. Here, as soon as A has severed the tree in order to such taking, he has committed theft. (b) A puts a bait for dogs in his pocket, and thus induces Z's dog to follow it. Here, if A's intention be dishonestly to take the dog out of Z's possession without Z's consent, A has committed theft as soon as Z's dog has begun to follow A. (c) A meets a bullock carrying a box of treasure. He drives the bullock in a certain direction, in order that he may dishonestly take the treasure. As soon as the bullock begins to move, A has committed theft of the treasure. (d) A, being Z's servant, and entrusted by Z with the care of Z's plate, dishonestly runs away with the plate, without Z's consent. A has committed theft. (e) Z, going on a journey entrusts his plate to A, the keeper of a warehouse, till Z shall return. A carries the plate to a goldsmith and sells it. Here the plate was not in Z's possession. It could not therefore be taken out of Z's possession, and A has not committed theft, though he may have committed criminal breach of trust. (f) A finds a ring belonging to Z on a table in the house which Z occupies. Here the ring is in Z's possession, and if A dishonestly removes it, A commits theft. (g) A finds a ring lying on the high road, not in the possession of any person. A, by taking it, commits no theft, though he may commit criminal misappropriation of property. (h) A sees a ring belonging to Z lying on a table in Z's house. Not venturing to misappropriate the ring immediately for fear of search and detection, A hides the ring in a place where it is highly improbable that it will ever be found by Z, with the intention of taking the ring from the hiding place and selling it when the loss is forgotten. Here A, at the time of first moving the ring, commits theft. (i) A delivers his watch to Z, a jeweller, to be regulated. Z carries it to his shop. A, not owing to the jeweller any debt for which the jeweller might lawfully detain the watch as a security, enters the shop openly, takes his watch by force out of Z's hand, and carries it away. Here A, though he may have committed criminal trespass and assault, has not committed theft, inasmuch as what he did was not done dishonestly. (j) If A owes money to Z for repairing the watch, and if Z retains the watch lawfully as a security for the debt, and A takes the watch out of Z's possession, with the intention of depriving Z of the property as a security for his debt, he commits theft, inasmuch as he takes it dishonestly. (k) Again, if A, having pawned his watch to Z, takes it out of Z's possession without Z's consent, not having paid what he borrowed on the watch, he commits theft, though the watch is his own property inasmuch as he takes it dishonestly. (l) A takes an article belonging to Z out of Z's possession, without Z's consent, with the intention of keeping it until he obtains money from Z as a reward for its restoration. Here A takes dishonestly. A has therefore committed theft. (m) A, being on friendly terms with Z, goes into Z's library in Z's absence, and takes away a book without Z's express consent for the purpose merely of reading it, and with the intention of returning it. Here, it is probable that A may have conceived that he had Z's implied consent to use Z's book. If this was A's impression, A has not committed theft. (n) A asks charity from Z's wife. She gives A money, food and clothes, which A knows to belong to Z here husband. Here it is probable that A may conceive that Z's wife is authorised to give away alms. If this was A's impression, A has not committed theft. (o) A is the paramour of Z's wife. She gives a valuable property, which A knows to belong to her husband Z, and to be such property as she has not authority from Z to give. If A takes the property dishonestly, he commits theft. (p) A, in good faith, believing property belonging to Z to be A's own property, takes that property out of Z's possession. Here, as A does not take dishonestly, he does not commit theft.