

## Desperate mother who resorted to shoplifting

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — A magistrate's court postponed sentence today on a mother, who pleaded guilty to shoplifting, after hearing mitigation by her counsel.

Counsel Jerald A. Gomez said that Lai Yoke Lin, 30, was a "desperate mother" who had three children, aged one to five, to look after.

"The children were neglected by their father. Lai did a wrongful act for a rightful reason. She was in a desperate situation when committing the offence," he said.

Magistrate Noraishah Muyop will pass sentence on Wednesday. Lai shoplifted three cans of powdered milk worth \$65.70 from the Hankyu Jaya Supermarket, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, on May 8.

## Shoplifting mum let off with warning

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — A mother of three, who pleaded guilty to shoplifting milk powder at Hankyu Jaya Supermarket here, was freed by a magistrate's court with a warning today.

Magistrate Noraishah Muyop told Lai Yoke Lin, 30, that she would be jailed if she repeated the offence.

"The court believes your story that you stole the milk to feed your children and so exercises its discretion to release you with a caution," she said.

"You are young. Stealing is not the only means for you to support your children."

Lai had admitted stealing three cans of milk powder worth \$65.70 from the supermarket, in Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, on May 8.

Defence counsel Jerald A. Gomez asked the court to consider Lai's state of mind when she was in remand.

"She tried to kill herself by drinking a bottle of shampoo on Mother's Day because she could not be with her children," he said.

He said he had received numerous calls from concerned citizens offering donations for the children.

## Mum freed of shoplifting charge

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — A mother of three cried when a magistrate's court here today discharged and cautioned her for shoplifting a bedsheet for her children.

In releasing Lai Yoke Lin, 30, magistrate Lee Lay Choo said the court did not condone such a crime but believed the circumstances leading to the act.

Lai, who admitted to the offence, was arrested by a guard for shoplifting a bedsheet worth \$131 at the Mun Loong Store in KL Plaza, here on April 4 last year.

Defence counsel Jerald Gomez, in mitigation, said Lai had been in dire straits for the past year.

"Her husband did not take responsibility for the household expenses. The accused had to use her past savings to pay rent and food to shelter the family," said Mr Gomez, adding that in three years she ran out of money and resorted to borrowing from friends.

"It came to a terrible stage when she couldn't bear to see her children go hungry anymore and she decided to steal," he added.

"The main intention was to feed the children and she made a mistake but out of necessity," he said.

Lai had been in remand for 40 days since her arrest, added Mr Gomez.

Counsel told the court that concerned citizens had called *The Star* and had offered donations for Lai's children.

"It reflects that society cared," he said.

Lai was released on May 15, by magistrate Noraishah Muyop in another court for a similar offence committed earlier this month.

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