

# 監守自盜

*jian1 shou3 zi4 dao4*

More than HK\$1 million in bail money went missing from a safety box at Wan Chai police station together with a sergeant who worked there.

After he went off duty, the sergeant allegedly notified his colleagues through a text message that the key to the safety box was in a drawer. But when a senior officer opened the safe, he discovered that the money had disappeared.

The sergeant allegedly fled to Macau. A police spokesman said an initial investigation indicated a police officer is suspected of being involved in the theft. He had the key to the safety box, and was the very person charged with keeping the money safe, so this is a typical case of “監守自盜” (*jian1 shou3 zi4 dao4*).

“監” (*jian1*) is “to supervise,” “to oversee,” “to watch,” “守” (*shou3*) “to guard,” “to keep watch,” “to defend,” “自” (*zi4*) “self” and “盜” (*dao4*) “to steal,” “to rob.” Literally, “監守自盜”

## Idiom by Lon Yan

(*jian1 shou3 zi4 dao4*) is “watch and self steal,” “the one who guards, steals.” It means “to steal what is entrusted to one’s care,” “to embezzle.”

“監守自盜” (*jian1 shou3 zi4 dao4*) is considered one of the worst kinds of conduct, as the criminal has breached the trust others have placed in him or her.

In fact, “監守自盜” (*jian1 shou3 zi4 dao4*) is a rather common crime. It happens when people who have access to large sums of money succumb to temptation in a moment of weakness, or when they have to pay off large debts, which was reported to be a possible element in this case.

### Terms containing the character “盜” (*dao4*) include:

盜版 (*dao4 ban3*) - illegally copy

盜賊 (*dao4 zei2*) - a robber

大盜 (*da4 dao4*) - a notorious bandit leader

盜竊 (*dao4 qie4*) - to steal