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Four sentenced for bribery over sale of milk powder

27 August 2012

A parallel goods trader, two managers of a supermarket chain and a shop supervisor of a health and beauty retailer chain, charged by the ICAC, were today (Monday) sentenced at Kwun Tong Magistracy for bribery in relation to the sale of milk powder.

Cheung Shiu-chor, 51, a parallel goods trader, was given a jail term of three months and two weeks by Magistrate Mr Anthony Yuen Wai-ming.

Co-defendants Wu Ka-keung, 42, and Lam Kwok-fai, 36, both managers of Parknshop, were respectively jailed for three months and two months, with their sentences suspended for 18 months. Lau Koon-hung, 40, a shop supervisor of Watsons, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months.

Wu and Lam were each fined \$3,000, while Wu, Lam and Lau were also ordered to pay a restitution ranging from \$100 to \$500.

The magistrate also ordered that 354 cans of milk powder, worth over \$70,000, which were seized by ICAC officers when they were about to be delivered to the mainland, be confiscated from Cheung.

Cheung was today convicted of four counts of offering an advantage to an agent, contrary to Section 9(2)(b) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (POBO).

Wu and Lam were each today found guilty of one count of agent accepting an advantage, contrary to Section 9(1)(b) of the POBO, while Lau earlier pleaded guilty to a similar offence.

The court heard that at the material times, Parknshop and Watsons, which were divisions of A.S. Watson Group (HK) Limited, implemented a policy that each customer was only allowed to purchase three cans of milk powder of several high-demand brands per day.

Wu and Lam were respectively attached to the Wong Tai Sin Shopping Centre Branch and the Chuk Yuen Shopping Centre Branch of Parknshop, while Lau was attached to the Sheung Fung Street Branch of Watsons.

As a regular customer of the three branches, Cheung usually called Wu, Lam and Lau to inquire the availability of milk powder.

The court heard that between January and April 2011, Cheung offered "laises" totalling \$1,600 to Wu, Lau and other employees of Parknshop and Watsons as rewards for assisting in purchasing large quantities of milk powder.

Wu and Lau each accepted a "laisee" of \$500 from Cheung, while Lam accepted a "laisee" of \$200 from him.

The court heard that Cheung was arrested on May 6, 2011 when he was providing milk powder for his couriers to deliver them to the mainland. 354 cans of milk powder were seized by ICAC officers at the scene.

Parknshop and Watsons had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during the investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by prosecuting counsel Liza Yip, assisted by ICAC officer Wilson Tang.

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