

## Steal — Tegleq

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### ILAIT TEGLENGARTAARTUT. – SOME PEOPLE LIKE TO STEAL.

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Photo: Cormorant skin parkas. Etholen Collection.  
National Museum of Finland.

Stealing was not a common problem in classical Alutiiq society. Although powerful people organized raiding parties to ransack other villages for food, goods, and even slaves, theft within a community was rare. As in many northern societies where families shared their possessions and assisted those in need, there was little need to steal. Alutiiq people abhorred thievery and exacted stiff social penalties of those caught pilfering from friends or neighbors.

Among Alutiiq people, thefts were avenged with shaming and shunning. If the stolen property could be identified, the victim of a theft could retrieve it. This was usually done in a public place so that the culprit could be shamed in front of the community. The village chief might be consulted for advice on how to treat the crime, particularly for a repeat offender. Remedies included public denouncement, an embarrassing nickname, or a shameful song about the stealer. In extreme cases, the thief might be forcibly stripped of his or her parka. Because each parka was made to reflect an individual's social status, family, and achievements, removing a thief's parka symbolically stripped him of his place in Alutiiq society.