

1.7B ☸ TEXT	<i>Short Passages 2</i>	1.7B ☸ PALI	<i>Khuddakapāṭha 2</i>
<p>I undertake the element of training refraining from: taking what has not been given.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Middle Length Discourses 41</i></p>		<p><i>adinnādānā</i> <i>veramaṇī-</i> <i>sikkhāpadaṃ</i> <i>samādiyāmi.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Majjhima Nikāya 41</i></p>	
<p>Abandoning the taking of what is not given, one refrains from taking what is not given; one does not take by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or in the forest.</p>		<p><i>adinnādānaṃ pahāya</i> <i>adinnādānā paṭivirato hoti.</i></p> <p><i>yaṃ taṃ parassa paravittūpakaraṇaṃ,</i> <i>gāmagataṃ vā araṇṇagataṃ vā,</i> <i>taṃ nādinnaṃ theyyasaṅkhātaṃ ādātā hoti.</i></p>	

1.7B ❖ COMMENT

A. The word ‘stealing’ and the phrase ‘taking what is not given’ are not equivalent. The wording of this guideline for training is more exacting than what is normally covered by ‘theft’. It might include not picking up something for oneself that someone else has dropped on the street, or not taking more than one after-dinner mint at a restaurant, or not taking an extra micro-bottle of shampoo when leaving a hotel, or not taking an extra helping of food from a serving dish when it looks likely to run short... There are so many situations where we can be more sensitive to the whole issue of taking things for ourselves.

B. The monastic community takes this matter very seriously, and in many cases will not eat food unless it has been formally offered. While accommodations are sometimes made in the West (e.g., helping oneself at a buffet table in a retreat center is sometimes okay if the entire table has been formally offered), traditionally food must be intentionally placed in the bowl of a monk or nun in order for it to be allowable.

1.7B ♦ LANGUAGE

A. This phrase is built around another wonderful use and re-use of the verb we now know well, *√dā* = ‘to give’. Here is how it goes: The basic form of the verb ‘to give’ is *dadāti* (one gives), but the prefix *ā-* reverses this (*ā + dadāti*), so the word *ādāna* means taking something rather than giving something. Next, the past participle (words of completed action) of *dadāti* is *dinna*, which means something like ‘that which has been given’. This too is reversed in meaning with the addition of an

'a' (a short 'a' this time; the last one was a long 'ā'), meaning something that has *not* been given. Put the two parts together, and you get 'taking what has not been given'. Similar wording is found in the last line of the text.

1.7B ★ INVESTIGATION

A. In Modules 1.3 and 1.4 above we looked very closely at giving, and here we will be investigating its counterpart, taking. As noted earlier, giving and taking are a natural part of human interactions, and we do both quite a lot in many ways every day. For this week, look closely at the nature of the mind in moments of taking something. If an item is handed to you, does it feel different than if you pick something up without anyone being around? What is going on in the mind at the moment of taking possession of something that a moment before had been outside your possession?

B. I think one of the things we are meant to be attentive to here is any subtle experience of grasping or clinging. Just as it takes a moment of non-clinging to give something to another, perhaps it takes a moment of clinging to take something from another, even if it is offered you're your hands close over the object, is there some subtle hint of 'Mine!' going on? Notice this sensation will increase in direct proportion to how desirable or how wanted the object is.

C. Here is an example: What if you come across a hat that someone has dropped in the park, but nobody is in sight. You could really use a hat, and this is a good one. You have two options: 1) you can take the hat, under the age-old rule of 'finders keepers', or 2) you can put it on a bench with the understanding that whoever lost it might retrace their steps and retrieve it. What do you do? This text is pointing us toward the subtle experiential difference between the two responses.

1.7B ☆ PRACTICE

A. How does it feel to use things appropriately, without feeling any particular attachment to them? Much of the time we are taking things—picking them up and putting them down again—without any sense of ownership or acquisition. See if you can become familiar with this sensation of using things without attachment. You may be doing something as simple as washing the dishes, taking one up, washing it, and putting it down again. A totally neutral and ordinary thing to be doing.

B. Now let's say you get to a particularly fragile dish, or some special item that has been handed down to you, or something particularly valuable. Can you feel yourself regarding it differently than the others? Can you feel that enhanced caring, that additional regard, that sense that you are now doing something that *matters*? There is a subtle emotional shift going on here, and learning to recognize it while doing something mundane can be a useful exercise for noticing when this happens in other spheres of life. Find an exercise that works for you to explore this phenomenon.

C. Try going through your day noticing the shift between taking up the things you really want and like, taking up the things you really don't want and don't like, and taking and giving things about which you feel entirely neutral. Expand this to include non-material experiences: taking praise and blame, receiving kindness and anger, taking things into your awareness by giving them attention.