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# Gṛhastha in the Śramaṇic Discourse

## A LEXICAL SURVEY OF HOUSE RESIDENTS IN EARLY PĀLI TEXTS

Oliver Freiberger

AS RECENT STUDIES of ancient Indian literature have demonstrated, the early Brahmanical vision of society centers on the householder (Olivelle 1993; Olivelle 2006c). From the early dharma literature onward the technical term for the Brahmanical householder has been grhastha, literally "house resident." In her study of the concept's history Stephanie Jamison (Ch. 1, this volume) shows that grhastha, a term so common and familiar in Brahmanical literature, is actually relatively late. It does not seem to appear before the Dharmasūtras and then replaces earlier designations for householders. While the Brahmanical authors' motives for introducing and establishing this very term remain obscure, Jamison makes an interesting suggestion. Since both Aśoka, in his inscriptions, and Buddhist texts in various Middle Indic dialects regularly juxtapose the "gone-forth" ascetic and the house resident, she assumes that "the grhastha-, so thoroughly embedded verbally in the orthodox Brahmanical dharma texts and so explicitly the foundation of the social system depicted therein, is actually a coinage of and a borrowing from śramanic discourse" (p. 18). The present chapter pursues one aspect of this argument a little further. It takes a closer look at early Buddhist texts in Pāli and surveys the vocabulary for householders therein. If these texts represent one expression of the "śramanic discourse" that may have been the source for the

Brahmanical *grhastha*, their usage of this—and other—terms might yield useful insights.

While Jamison's suggestion is appealing, the dating of the sources makes it notoriously difficult to provide hard evidence for an act of "borrowing." Thankfully we can date Aśoka's inscriptions fairly accurately to the third century BCE. The Dharmasūtras, in which, according to Jamison, the term grhastha appears for the first time in Brahmanical literature, are less precisely datable, but Patrick Olivelle makes a convincing argument for dating them around the same time (Olivelle 1999: xxxiv; Olivelle 2010: 37-38). So "borrowing" between these texts seems possible in theory. But when Aśoka's inscriptions serve as evidence, we must keep in mind that although he was likely influenced more by the śramanic than by the Brahmanical discourse, his voice is that of the emperor. When he juxtaposes renouncers and householders in his inscriptions, this should probably be viewed, at most, as a reflection of the śramanic discourse. Furthermore, it seems rather unlikely that the authors of the Dharmasūtras would turn directly to the inscriptions of Aśoka—of all people—to find inspiration in their pursuit to establish the arguably most important category of their ideology. While Aśoka's inscriptions are a very appealing source because they can be dated so well, I believe that they can serve merely as an indirect source for the śramanic discourse. Aśoka is not a primary voice in that discourse, and—who knows?—he may have gotten it wrong.

The earliest source for a primary voice in the śramaṇic discourse are Buddhist texts. Dating the early Buddhist texts, however, is difficult because there is little to no external reference to them, or vice versa. Thus, for our present question we seem to have two options: Either we dismiss the Buddhist texts entirely because they cannot serve as a reliable source for showing that the term <code>grhastha</code> was commonly used among <code>śramaṇas before</code> the Dharmasūtras were composed. Or we enter the realm of uncertainty and assume that the earliest extant Buddhist texts have preserved features of the pre-Dharmasūtra śramaṇic discourse. The fact that Jamison refers to various Middle Indic Buddhist texts as evidence for the juxtaposition of ascetic and house resident shows that she decided to take the latter route.

This approach has great potential. Aside from the fact that insisting on dateable sources would not get us very far, the Buddhist texts provide a multitude of aspects that may enrich the discussion, as I will try to show. My limited focus here is exclusively on early Buddhist texts that were composed in Pāli. While an absolute dating of the so-called Pāli canon is difficult, scholars

have been able to establish some relative chronology within the canon. Some texts are clearly much younger than others, and a case can be made for a certain corpus that broadly contains the earliest layer of Pāli texts.¹ This corpus, which is the basis for the discussion in this paper, includes the four major nikāyas (Dīgha, Majjhima, Saṃyutta, and Anguttara Nikāya) as well as four old collections from the fifth, the Khuddaka Nikāya, namely the Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, and Sutta-Nipāta. Within this corpus some short individual collections, such as the Aṭṭhakavagga and the Pārāyaṇavagga of the Sutta-Nipāta, are regarded as being very old (Gómez 1976: 139; Vetter 1988: 101–106; Hinüber 1996: 49).² But for most texts in this corpus it is difficult to establish a firm chronological position, also because of processes of borrowing and exchange between nikāyas. The benefit of the corpus, which consists of twenty volumes in the edition of the Pāli Text Society, is that it constitutes a rich source for our discussion.³

In order to supplement Jamison's study with regard to this single point and possibly to find more evidence to support her suggestion, I did a word search of gahaṭṭha (Pāli for gṛhastha) in those early Pāli texts. I will discuss the results in greater detail below, but what immediately struck me was that the term is, in fact, rather rare. It does not show up once in the entire Dīgha Nikāya (three volumes in the edition of the Pali Text Society), much of which is often regarded as belonging to the older layers within the corpus. Since the Dīgha Nikāya also includes many of the Buddha's extended conversations with Brahmins, a robust presence of the term grhastha would have allowed for exciting speculations. Among all the mentioned collections, it is in the Aṅguttara Nikāya (five volumes), which is normally seen as slightly younger, that the word appears most often, but even there it is attested only twelve times. In total, I found a mere twenty-seven instances of the term gahaṭṭha in the corpus of earliest Pāli texts.

<sup>1.</sup> See the respective sections in Hinüber 1996.

<sup>2.</sup> The word gahattha (Skt. grhastha) does not appear in them.

<sup>3.</sup> Other texts that probably belong to this early layer too are the Pātimokkha Sutta, the list of individual monastic rules for monks and nuns, and the kammavācās, formulas of formal acts of the monastic community. In the Bhikkhupātimokkha Sutta, of all the potential terms, gahapati/gahapatānī appears eleven times (all in the Nissaggiya Pācittiya section) and gihin once (Pācittiya 29). In the Bhikkhunīpātimokkha Sutta, gahapati/gahapatānī appears, in addition, in two rules (Sanghādisesa 1 and Pācittiya 36), gihin in one (Pācittiya 44), and agārika in two (Pācittiya 28 and 46). In the kammavācās, gahapati has three occurrences (in Vin II 18; 19–20; 160) and gihin one (Vin II 288). The usage corresponds to the findings below. The term gahattha does not appear at all in any of these texts.

I was puzzled because I knew from my earlier work that those texts talk about house residents quite often, but I had never looked closely at the distinctions between the respective Pāli terms. In her chapter, Jamison mentioned other Middle Indic terms for "house" as well, which led me to conduct word searches for multiple possible combinations of "house" and "resident," as well as other terms used for such persons. I will discuss the results below. While most compounds that I checked are not attested at all or extremely rare, three stood out—in terms of quantity—in a startling way. While gahaṭṭha appeared 27 times, gihin (Skt. gṛhin) yielded 65 hits, and gahapati (Skt. gṛhapati) yielded 224.4

This shows, first of all, that gahaṭṭha is not the only term, and by far not the most common one, that the authors of the early Pāli texts had at their disposal when they wanted to refer to house residents. The point of Jamison's argument was, of course, that grhastha might have been particularly attractive for Brahmanical authors because it often appears in the contrastive pair of house residents and ascetics. As she notes, Margaret Cone's new Dictionary of Pāli says that gahaṭṭha is "very often contrasted with pabbajita." In the light of the search results above, however, it is important to note that Cone's entry for gihin says almost the same: "often contrasted with pabbajita" (Cone 2010: s.v. gihin). As we will see, its frequency and its usage make gihin a serious contender indeed. And what do we do about the overwhelming presence of gahapati, a term that, as Jamison argues, the Brahmanical authors of the Dharmasūtras had good reason to dismiss for their purposes? In order to draw further conclusions, it seems useful to examine the usage of these terms in greater detail.

<sup>4.</sup> For my search I used the electronic versions of the Pali Text Society editions available on the website GRETIL (http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/). Since the search function does not seem to recognize a word that carries over a line break, some occurrences may have not been found. A term is counted only once for each narrative setting; only the first occurrence is noted here. Sometimes the term appears very often in one sutta, for example when the Buddha repeatedly addresses his conversation partner as gahapati in the vocative, but here it will be counted only once. I did not consider the--omnipresent-formula, "he goes forth from home into homelessness" (agārasmā anagāriyam pabbajati). Aside from the three terms discussed here, the fourth most frequent term is gharāvāsa (15 occurrences), which appears almost exclusively in the stock phrase sambādho gharāvāso rajopatho, abbhokāso pabbajjā (DN I 63,3; DN I 250,11; MN I 179,12; MN I 240,20; MN I 267,24; MN I 344,30; MN II 211,29; SN II 219,25; SNV 350,23; AN II 208,23; AN V 204,17; Ud 59,31; Sn 72,4; also in MN II 198,21 and AN III 295,22). Other terms are agārikabhūta/agāriyabhūta (DN III 235,11; MN I 504,18; SN II 219,24; SN V 89,16; AN II 124,3; AN III 375,9; AN IV 370,22; AN IV 372,9; Ud 18,29; Ud 57,22); gharamesin (SN I 215,3; Sn 33,11; It 112,6); agarin (Sn 66,15), and gharattha (v.l. It 112,6). See the table in the appendix for a quantitative distribution of the terms.

#### The Term Gahattha in Early Pāli Texts

In the examined corpus of early Pāli texts, the contrastive pair of <code>gahatṭha</code> and ascetic (<code>pabbajita</code>, <code>anāgara</code>, et al.) appears in two different ways, which may be referred to as an inclusive and an exclusive usage, respectively. For the inclusive usage the speaker makes a statement that applies to both groups equally. Instances of this are the idea that the "true" Brahmin (=the ideal ascetic) does not mingle with either <code>gahaṭṭhas</code> or <code>anāgaras</code> or the note that the Buddha does not praise bonding (<code>samsagga</code>) with <code>gahaṭṭhas</code> and <code>pabbajitas</code>. Living together too closely with <code>gahaṭṭhas</code> and <code>pabbajitas</code> leads to a <code>bhikkhu</code>'s decline. A famous poem in the <code>Sutta-Nipāta</code> includes a verse that says that some <code>gahaṭṭhas</code> and some <code>pabbajitas</code> were not kindly disposed and that one should wander solitary as a rhinoceros horn. The pair appears in an inclusive usage also when the text states that if a <code>paribbājaka</code> or a <code>gahaṭṭha</code> reviles the Buddha or a disciple of his, he should be known to be a low person or outcaste (<code>vasala</code>, Skt. <code>vṛṣala</code>). In the same that the same that the should be known to be a low person or outcaste (<code>vasala</code>, Skt. <code>vṛṣala</code>).

While all these are connoted negatively, there are just as many instances of a positive inclusive usage. When asked by non-Buddhist ascetics about what makes the *bhikkhus* so confident, they are supposed to say, as one of four points, that both *gahaṭṭhas* and *pabbajitas*, as their "*dhamma-*fellows" (*sahādhammikā*), were dear and pleasing to them. <sup>11</sup> The fact that *gahaṭṭha* can refer to a Buddhist lay follower is confirmed by another passage in which the god Sakka (=Indra) pays homage to *pabbajitas* and to "merit-making house residents" (*gahaṭṭhā* 

<sup>5.</sup> Asaṃsaṭṭham gahaṭṭhehi anāgārehi c' ūbhayam | anokasārim appiccham tam aham brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ (Dh 113,18–19; Sn 120,16–17).

<sup>6.</sup> Sagahatthapabbajitehi kho aham Moggallana samsaggam na vannayami (AN IV 88,2-3).

<sup>7.</sup> And socializing in a way typical of gihins; see below.

<sup>8.</sup> Sekho bhikkhu samsaṭṭho viharati sagahaṭṭhapabbajitehi ananulomikena gihisaṃsaggena is one of the five things that cause the decline of a bhikkhu (bhikkhuno parihānāya saṃvattanti; AN III 116,16-17 and 27-29) and one of the five disadvantages of dwelling too long at one place (ādīnavā atinivāsa; AN III 258,2 and 5-6).

<sup>9.</sup> Dussangahā pabbajitā pi eke | atho gahatthā gharam āvasantā, | appossukko paraputtesu hutvā | eko care [khaggavisānakappo] (Sn 7,19-22). Or "solitary like a rhinoceros." Khaggavisāna (lit. "sword-horn"), in conjunction with kappa ("like") can refer both to a rhinoceros and to the horn of a rhinoceros, and scholars have different opinions about how to translate this phrase. I follow K. R. Norman here, but this translation is not relevant for the argument of the present essay.

<sup>10.</sup> Yo buddham paribhāsati atha vā tassa sāvakam | paribbājam gahaṭṭham vā, tam jaññā ['vasalo' iti] (Sn 23,10-11).

<sup>11.</sup> Sahadhammikā kho pana no piyā manāpā gahaṭṭhā c' eva pabbajitā ca (MN I 64,13-14).

puññakarā) that are "virtuous laypeople" (sīlavanto upāsakā) (SN I 234,28). Here upāsaka, the Buddhist technical term for a committed lay follower, and gahaṭṭha refer to the same persons. This positive inclusive usage is apparent also when a non-Buddhist ascetic who is about to join the Buddhist Saṅgha remarks that the Buddha's assembly included both gahaṭṭhas and pabbajitas (parisā sagahaṭṭhapabbajitā, MN I 493,26), or when the Buddha says about the ideal elder monk (thera) that he had a large retinue of gahaṭṭhas and pabbajitas (sagahaṭṭhapabbajitānam bahujanaparivāra, AN III 114,20). In the Aṅguttara Nikāya the Buddha states that five things should often be contemplated by women, men, gahaṭṭhas, and pabbajitas, ¹² namely old age, illness, death, impermanence, and kamma.¹³

All these instances have in common that the respective statement applies to both the gahaṭṭha and the ascetic equally. In contrast, the exclusive usage juxtaposes the two, either as mutually complementary groups or to indicate tensions. The idea of complementarity is reflected in statements that present the gahaṭṭha as the ideal lay follower. An Itivuttaka passage states that house residents and houseless ascetics are beneficial (bahūpakāra) to each other because the former donate material goods while the latter teach the dhamma. The passage uses three different terms for "house resident" (sāgāra, gahaṭṭha, gharamesin) synonymously and anāgāra for the ascetic.¹⁴ In the Dhammika Sutta of the Sutta-Nipāta, one who "goes from the house to the houseless state" (agāra anagāram eti) is juxtaposed to the "upāsaka with a house" (agārin upāsaka). The latter is the ideal gahaṭṭha, whose way of life is in accordance with the ethical norms (pañcasīla, etc.) (Sn 69,3–70,22).¹⁵ In the Cunda Sutta

<sup>12.</sup> Pañc' imāni bhikkhave ṭhānāni abhiṇhaṃ paccavekkhitabbāni itthiyā vā purisena vā gahatthena vā pabbajitena vā (AN III 71,23–25).

<sup>13.</sup> In a terminologically complicated passage, Subha, a Brahmin youth, asks the Buddha to comment on the statement of Brahmins that gahaṭṭhas were accomplished in the right conduct (ñāya), the dhamma, and the good (kusala), while pabbajitas were not (Brāhmaṇā, bho Gotama, evam āhaṃsu: Gahaṭṭho ārādhako hoti ñāyaṃ dhammam kusalaṃ; na pabbajito ārādhako hoti ñāyaṃ dhammaṃ kusalan ti. Idha bhavaṃ Gotamo kim āhāti? MN II 197,6–9). The Buddha responds that both house residents (gihins) and pabbajitas can accomplish—or not accomplish—the right way. House residents and ascetics are juxtaposed here, but with varying terms. Note that only Subha uses gahaṭṭha—prior to this passage a householder was called a gahapati. And the Buddha does not adopt the same terminology in his response (as he usually does) but speaks of gihins (MN II 197,10–18).

<sup>14.</sup> Sāgāresu ca cīvaram paccayam sayanāsanam | anāgārā paṭicchanti parissayavinodanam || Sugatam pana nissāya gahaṭṭhā gharamesino | saddahānā arahatam ariyapaññāya jhāyino || (It 112,1–8).

<sup>15.</sup> In the final verse the good householder (here: gihin) is born in heaven (etaṃ gihī vattayaṃ appamatto Sayampabhe nāma upeti deve ti; Sn 70,21).

the gahaṭṭha is a learned, wise lay disciple (sutavā ariyasāvako sapañño) who can distinguish between four kinds of samanas (the knower, teacher, and practitioner vs. the defiler of the way [magga]) and understands that not all samaṇas are corrupt.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from this exclusive usage, which stresses the complementarity of house residents and ascetics, there are a few passages that make a qualitative distinction between the two. When the Buddha, while talking with the Brahmin Subha, asks him whether he observes five things for doing good, as proclaimed by the Brahmins, more among gahaṭṭhas or among pabbajitas, Subha declares that he observes them abundantly among pabbajitas. He explains that gahaṭṭhas were permanently busy with their worldly affairs, while pabbajitas could focus on asceticism, celibacy, study, and renunciation. The Buddha agrees implicitly by reiterating the accomplishments of ascetics (MN II 205–206). In a short sutta of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, a deva appears before the bhikkhu Nāgadatta and urges him not to spend too much time among house residents, because the entanglement with society was harmful to his spiritual development.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, in several passages gahaṭṭha appears independently, outside of the contrastive pair and unconnected to pabbajita or other terms for houseless ascetics. Here a gahaṭṭha is a wealthy and generous donor (yācayoga dānapati) who intends to make merit (puñāatthika) (Sn 87,22). 18 Along the same lines, a number of passages describe qualities of a gahaṭṭha by which his generosity and merit increase. 19 Elsewhere the Brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, lays out four qualities of a great man before the Buddha, one of them being skillfulness and diligence in attending to the various duties of a householder (tāni gahaṭṭhakāni kiṃkaraniyāni). The Buddha neither rejects nor approves these four but lists his own four qualities that do not include a specific relationship with house residents. Then everyone agrees that the Buddha possesses these (AN II 35,25). And Nakulamātā, who is often listed as one of the most prominent female lay followers, assures her sick husband

<sup>16.</sup> Ete ca paṭivijjhi yo gahaṭṭho sutavā ariyasāvako sapañño sabbe n' etādisā ti ñatvā, iti disvā na hāpeti tassa saddhā, katham hi duṭṭhena asampaduṭṭham suddham asuddhena samam kareyyā ti (Sn 17,25–18,4). This is the response to a question raised by the smith Cunda.

<sup>17.</sup> Kāle pavissa Nāgadatta divā ca āgantvā ativela- | cārī saṃsaṭṭho gahaṭṭhehi | samānasukhadukkho || bhāyāmi Nāgadattaṃ suppagabbhaṃ | kulesu vinibandhaṃ | mā heva maccurañño balavato | antakassa vasam eyyā ti || (SN I 201,3–10).

<sup>18.</sup> Note that the question about the right "sacrifice," or gift (huta; yajamāna) is asked by a wealthy young Brahmin.

<sup>19.</sup> See AN III 354,16; AN IV 285,14; AN IV 289,17; AN IV 322,20; AN IV 325,12.

that if he died she will not remarry, noting that they had lived a "a house resident's celibate life" (gahaṭṭhakaṃ brahmacariyaṃ) for sixteen years (AN III 296,8).<sup>20</sup>

### The Term Gihin in Early Pāli Texts

Another term for house resident, *gihin*, appears in the corpus more than twice as often as *gahaṭṭha* (sixty-five versus twenty-seven occurrences). Like *gahaṭṭha*, it is used for contrasting the house resident and the ascetic, but it almost always appears in the exclusive usage.<sup>21</sup> The two are often presented as two alternative ways of life,<sup>22</sup> sometimes also in a diachronic order, when the text refers to an ascetic's pre-ascetic life.<sup>23</sup> Often *gihins* appear in groups (*gihiparisā*), which an ascetic addresses and instructs in religious matters.<sup>24</sup> This is presented as an attractive situation for ascetics. In one passage a group of ascetics sends one of them off to become a Buddhist *bhikkhu*, learn the *dhamma*, and then tell them about it, so that they can teach it to the house residents (*gihīnam*) and become equally revered (*SN* II 120,5). Some groups of *gihins* are white-clad (*gihī odātavasanā*)<sup>25</sup> and, as such, are sometimes identified as followers (*sāvakā*) of

<sup>20.</sup> For more on Nakulamātā see below, under *gahapati*. Note also that in this passage she addresses her husband as *gahapati*. This seems to be the only occurrence of the phrase *gahaṭṭhakaṃ brahmacariyaṃ* in the corpus. In his translation Bhikkhu Bodhi notes (n. 1278) that "[i]t is not unusual in traditional Buddhist cultures for devout couples who have begotten several children to mutually agree to observe celibacy."

<sup>21.</sup> Only three passages have the inclusive usage, two of which are literal parallels: When the Buddha declares that he does not praise the wrong path, whether for *gihin* or for *pabbajita* (SN V 18,28; AN I 69,18), and when a prideful fool puts himself above both *gihins* and *pabbajitas* (Dh 20,13–15 [74]).

<sup>22.</sup> See *DN* III 147,15; 151,3; 152,11; 162,4; 163,21; 165,23; 167,5; 169,1 (here: *gihin* and *samaṇa*); 171,21; 174,18; 176,11; 179,7; *AN* I 49,15.

<sup>23.</sup> This is indicated by the compound purāṇagihīsahāya ("friend from house-resident times"): One bhikkhu was another bhikkhu's friend when he was still a house resident (MN III 124,28); and an ascetic who is a purāṇagihīsahāya visits the gahapati Citta (SN IV 300,9).

<sup>24.</sup> See *SN* I 111,11 (the Buddha in a Brahmin village); *MN* I 373,30 (Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta); *AN* III 184,6 (a *bhikkhu*). In *AN* IV 281,10, a man introduces himself and his company to the Buddha as house residents who enjoy sense-pleasures (gihī kāmabhogī) and asks the Buddha for a teaching about welfare in this and the future life; similarly in *AN* IV 438,19.

<sup>25.</sup> The gahapati-putta Kevaddha asks the Buddha to tell a monk to perform a miracle for the white-clad house residents (DNI 211,15); and Pessa, the elephant trainer, self-identifies as one of the "white-clad house residents" (MNI 340,13).

an ascetic teacher, such as the Buddha, $^{26}$  Nigaṇṭha Nāthaputta, $^{27}$  and perhaps also Purāṇa Kassapa. $^{28}$ 

The authors of our texts explain the proper conduct and the duties of *gihins* (*gihīsāmīcipaṭipadaṃ*; *gihisāmīcikāni sikkhāpadāni*; *gihidhamma*), which include caring for family, friends, servants, ascetics, et alia and providing the Saṅgha with robes, food, shelter and medicine.<sup>29</sup> In return, one of the purposes of the Buddhist Saṅgha's rules is compassion for *gihins*. The *bhikkhus* express this compassion by instructing them in religious matters and informing them about merit-making opportunities.<sup>30</sup> One passage says that when the *bhikkhus* behave well in a village, *gihins* will do their duty, and the novices will emulate the elder monks (*SN* II 269,24). But this relationship between *bhikkhus* and house residents is not without problems. *Upāsakas* can express their lack of confidence (*appasāda*) in a *bhikkhu* when he possesses eight qualities many of which cause harm to *gihins* (*AN* IV 345,21);<sup>31</sup> and Ānanda, who is busy talking to house residents (*gihisaññattibahulo*), is exhorted by a *deva* to stop excessive chatting.<sup>32</sup>

When juxtaposed directly, the life of *gihins* is regularly marked as inferior to that of *pabbajitas*. The *Sutta-Nipāta* says that having removed the marks of a house resident (*gihivyañjanāni*) and cut the house resident's bonds (*gihibandhanāni*), one should walk solitary as a rhinoceros horn (*Sn* 7,23 and 8,1; *Sn* 10,25). Similarly, other passages speak of the fetters and enjoyments

<sup>26.</sup> See MN II 23,27. In one passage, non-Buddhist paribbājakas see the Buddhist lay follower Anāthapindika approaching and remark that he was one of samanassa Gotamassa sāvakā gihī odātavasanā (AN V 185,21); the same with Vajjiyamāhita (AN V 190,1). In an assembly that values worldly things bhikkhus praise each other in the presence of white-clad gihins (AN I 73,29). And before his awakening the Buddha dreamed that many white-clad gihins would take refuge in him (AN III 242,11); see also DN III 124,6. When a bhikkhu tells the lay follower (here only: kulaputta) Hatthaka about the praise the Buddha had for Hatthaka, the latter shows modesty (appiccha) by saying that he hoped that no white-clad house resident (gihin) was present to hear it (AN IV 217,26).

<sup>27.</sup> See DN III 117,17 (=DN III 210,13); MN II 244,5.

<sup>28.</sup> According to Purāṇa Kassapa the gihī odātavasanā acelakasāvakā are one class of people; they may perhaps be regarded as lay followers of the Ājīvikas (AN III 384,2).

<sup>29.</sup> See DN III 192,6; AN II 65,7; AN III 41.3; see also DN II 196,6; DN III 188,16. The gahapati Anāthapiṇḍika follows the gihisāmīcikāni sikkhāpadāni taught by the Buddha (SN V 387,10).

<sup>30.</sup> AN I 98,20; AN III 263,17; AN III 263,27.

<sup>31.</sup> The Sangha can punish him too when he does that (AN IV 346,15). See also AN III 124,7, where the disciples of an unpurified teacher hesitate to report him to the *gihins*.

<sup>32.</sup> See SN I 199,27; see also AN III 116,28; AN III 258,6.

of house residents (gihisamyojana; gihibhoga), which come with being bound in society (saṃsaṭṭha).<sup>33</sup> Unlike the muni (or bhikkhu), the gihin is not totally restrained in respect of the killing of living creatures (Sn 38,3–10). Thus, of the two kinds of happiness, the gihī-sukha and the pabbajjā-sukha, the latter is superior (AN I 80,13). Gihins also do not have the capacity to discern whether a person has attained liberation and is an arahant or even on the path to arahantship.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, there are four kinds of happiness that a gihin who enjoys sensual pleasures (kāmabhogin) can achieve, namely happiness of ownership, enjoyment, freedom from debt, and blamelessness. 35 And one passage says that a white-clad gihin who follows five rules can become a streamenterer, which is the first of four Buddhist stages of spiritual achievement (AN III 211,22). But normally the term *gihin* is not used when the texts speak about spiritual accomplishments of house residents—the regular term in such contexts is *gahapati*, as discussed in the next section. In one passage Ānanda and Sāriputta give the gahapati Anāthapindika a dhamma talk that, as they point out, white-clad gihins normally do not receive (MN III 261,22). Another extraordinary gahapati is Citta who, in one passage, explains the four jhānas to an ascetic who is stunned as to how a white-clad gihin can have such superhuman wisdom (uttarimanussadhammā) and seeks to be ordained (SN IV 301,27). Note how in these two passages a house resident is called a gahapati when, from a religious perspective, he is identified as extraordinary. The ordinary people, among which he stands out, are called gihins. Finally, when the Buddha boasts that hundreds of white-clad gihins have attained nibbāna, he also calls them upāsaka and sāvaka (MN I 490,31). These three passages seem to be the only ones in the corpus that ascribe a high spiritual status to a gihin, and even here the term is always accompanied by a synonym that is normally used for this purpose (gahapati or upāsaka).36

<sup>33.</sup> See MN I 483,6; It 90,7; SN IV 180,18. See also Ud 21,21 + n. 5, where a sentence in which a bhikkhu decided to return to the "lower life" (hīna) has a variant reading which adds gihibhāva ("the lower condition of a house resident").

<sup>34.</sup> The Buddha addresses King Pasenadi and explains that, as a *gihin*, the king does not have that capacity (Ud 65,24; SN I 78,20). See also AN III 391,13.

<sup>35.</sup> See AN II 69,9; the Buddha is talking to the gahapati Anāthapiṇḍika.

<sup>36.</sup> In AN III 296,24, the extraordinary female lay follower Nakulamātā portrays herself as a white-clad sāvikā gihī, but in this passage no special accomplishments are associated with her.

#### The Term Gahapati in Early Pāli Texts

By far the most common term for a house resident in the here-examined corpus is gahapati (or gahapatika).37 Its number of occurrences (224) is more than three times the number of gihin and more than eight times the number of gahattha occurrences. One reason for this frequency lies in the fact that the term often occurs in stock phrases. Here the most frequent compound is the plural brāhmana-gahapatikā, an ambiguous term that could be translated either as "Brahmins and householders" or as "Brahmin householders." The compound, which appears almost exclusively in the plural, often refers to inhabitants of certain villages who hear that the Buddha is arriving and then listen to his *dhamma* instructions. Sometimes Māra incites or possesses some brāhmana-gahapatikā, which makes them hostile; sometimes they take refuge at the end of the story. Curiously, I. B. Horner, in her Majjhima Nikāya translation, speaks of "brahman householders" whenever the text identifies the respective village as a Brahmin village (brāhmaṇagāma), but of "brahmans and householders" when there is no such identifier.<sup>38</sup> That the latter may be the more likely reading is suggested by a Dīgha Nikāya passage that says that Mahāgovinda has been "a Brahmā for the Brahmins and a devatā for the gahapatikas."39 Other passages too suggest that the compound refers, in a generic way, to a group of house residents that is viewed as separate from, but somehow complementary to, Brahmins.<sup>40</sup> A number of times, when the king's care for all his subjects is discussed, the brāhmaṇa-gahapatikā appear alongside "town and country folk" (negama-jānapadā).41 The compound brāhmaṇa-gahapatikā is used descriptively to denote a certain part of society; it is generally not used for normative statements about the distinction between house residents and ascetics.

<sup>37.</sup> For a discussion of some meanings of *gahapati* see also Chakravarti 1996: 65–93 and Yamazaki 2005: 131–34.

<sup>38.</sup> Brāhmaṇa-gahapaṭikā of a Brahmin village are mentioned in DN 127,15; MN I 285,5; MN I 400,30; MN II 164,10; MN III 290,29; SN I 114,6; SN V 352,17 and 353,21; AN I 180,18; AN III 30,10; AN III 341,17; AN IV 340,26; Ud 78,7. Without the identifier in DN I 111,9; DN II 317,2; MN I 290,15; MN I 334,6; MN II 54,27; MN II 140,32; MN II 185,17; SN I 184,6.

<sup>39.</sup> Brahmā ca brāhmaṇānaṃ devatā ca gahapatikānaṃ (DN II 248,25). Note, however, that the compound does not appear in the passage.

<sup>40.</sup> See DN II 178,2; MN III 176,23; SN I 59,15; It 111,9.

<sup>41.</sup> See *DN* II 202,10; *DN* III 61,7. A similar wording is found in *DN* III 148,13; 153,6; 167,19; 169,16; 170,23; 172,11; 177,16; *MN* II 78,29; *MN* III 116,3–4; *AN* I 110,1; *AN* II 74,31; *AN* III 149,30. See also *DN* I 136,25.

In another stock occurrence the *gahapatikā* are listed as a group or assembly (*parisā*) among others, most often as the third after *khattiyas* and *brāhmaṇas*,<sup>42</sup> and with *samaṇas* as the fourth.<sup>43</sup> These *parisās* are described as important assemblies in society that a virtuous person approaches confidently. Some passages refer to smart members (*paṇḍitā*) of each of these four assemblies, who question the Buddha, cannot refute him, have faith in him, or take care of his relics after he dies.<sup>44</sup> In some lists the first three of these assemblies are wealthy (*mahāsāla*),<sup>45</sup> and while wise and virtuous people are born into them,<sup>46</sup> some of their members speak lies out of worldly desire or engage in misconduct and will therefore be born in hell after death.<sup>47</sup> Yet another list adds four divine assemblies (*Cātummahārājika-parisā*, *Tāvatiṃsa-parisā*, *Māra-parisā*, and *Brahma-parisā*), making it a total of eight assemblies in which the Buddha preaches.<sup>48</sup>

As Stephanie Jamison notes (Ch. 1, this volume), it is tempting to assume that in the list of three (khattiya, brāhmaṇa, gahapatika) gahapatika represents the Vaiśya class of the Brahmanical varṇa system. While it may certainly resonate in the respective passages, the authors do not specify features of the individual assemblies, or even differentiate them. The list always appears in an inclusive usage—what applies to one, applies to all. The fact that most lists also include divine beings or samaṇas—which, from the Buddhist perspective, would not exactly constitute a proper replacement of the fourth Brahmanical category, the Śūdras—further complicates the matter. In any case, since the link to the varṇa system is not explicitly made in the examined corpus, we should probably consider it as nothing more than a distant echo.

Another stock list in which *gahapati* regularly appears is the list of seven jewels (*ratana*) that belong to a person with thirty-two extraordinary marks when this person becomes a Cakkavattin, not a Buddha. The *gahapati-ratana* 

<sup>42.</sup> See DNI 8,23; DNI 67,3; MNI 86,19; MNI 88,7. Queen Mallikā has command over the girls ( $ka\bar{n}\bar{n}\bar{a}$ ) of these three assemblies at her court (ANII 205,11), and all such girls have soft hands and feet (ANIV 128,17).

<sup>43.</sup> See DN II 85,23; DN II 145,18; DN III 44,2-4 (here titthiyā instead of samanā); DN III 236,8; AN II 133,10; AN III 39,17; AN III 253,3; AN III 328,9; AN IV 80,33; AN IV 114,32.

<sup>44.</sup> See DN II 141,24; MN I 176,34; MN I 395,25; MN I 502,18; MN II 123,9; SN III 8,3.

<sup>45.</sup> DN II 146,17; DN II 169,13; DN III 16,20; SN I 71,11; AN IV 129,19.

<sup>46.</sup> MN I 289,8; MN III 100,8; MN III 177,28; AN IV 104,17; AN IV 239,9; AN V 290,23. See also DN III 258,21.

<sup>47.</sup> SN I 74,17; AN II 86,3; AN III 386,11.

<sup>48.</sup> DN II 109,7; DN III 260,4; MN I 72,19; AN IV 307,15.

(besides the elephant-jewel, the horse-jewel, the woman-jewel, and so on) is always part of the list.<sup>49</sup>

Aside from the appearance in stock lists, gahapati is the most common designator for house residents in the daily life of the Sangha. Some nikāyas have entire chapters devoted to them (Gahapativaggas).<sup>50</sup> Many individual and well-known Buddhist lay followers (upāsakas) are referred to as gahapatis: Anāthapiṇḍika,<sup>51</sup> Nakulapitā,<sup>52</sup> Hāliddikāni,<sup>53</sup> Ugga,<sup>54</sup> Citta,<sup>55</sup> both Citta and Hatthaka,<sup>56</sup> Uggata,<sup>57</sup> Tapussa,<sup>58</sup> Dasama,<sup>59</sup> Upāli (SN IV 110,6), Ghosita (SN IV 113,29), Dārukammika (AN III 391,3), Vajjiyamāhita (AN V 189,11), and the gahapatānī Nakulamātā.<sup>60</sup> Some, like Soṇa<sup>61</sup> and Sigāla/Singāla (DN III 180,5), are called "son of a gahapati" (gahapati-putta). The gahapati Sandhāna is identified by the ascetic Nigrodha as a house resident (gihin) and white-clad follower of the Buddha (Samanassa Gotamassa sāvakā gihī odātavasanā) (DN III 37,15–16). One gahapati named Upāli starts out as a Jain follower sent by Nigantha Nātaputta to the Buddha to refute him, but in the end

<sup>49.</sup> See *DN* I 89,3; *DN* II 16,18; *DN* II 176,7; 188,1; 191,32; 193,28; 195,14; 197,9; *DN* III 59,6; *DN* III 75,25; *DN* III 142,14; *DN* III 177,9; *MN* II 134,22; *MN* III 175, 14–15; *SN* V 99,5; *AN* IV 89,17; Sn 106,14. Only five gems are listed in *AN* III 167,29.

<sup>50.</sup> See, for example, SN II 68–80; SN IV 109–124; AN IV 208–235.

<sup>51.</sup> See MN III 258,4; SN I 56,8; SN I 210,30; SN II 68,7; AN I 62,33; AN I 261,16; AN I 262,21; AN II 63,26; AN II 65,2; AN II 65,26; AN II 69,5; AN III 45,4; AN III 47,15; AN III 204,28; AN III 206,24; AN III 211,18; AN IV 91,7; AN IV 392,13; AN IV 405,16; AN V 176,18; AN V 182,17; AN V 185,4; as the best of alms-givers: AN I 26,3.

<sup>52.</sup> See SN III 1,10; SN IV 116,15; as the best of those who converse intimately: AN I 26,15; AN II 61,20; AN III 295,15 (see also under gaha!!ha).

<sup>53.</sup> See SN III 9,14; SN III 13,1; SN IV 115,4.

<sup>54.</sup> See SN IV 109,5; SN IV 109,23; AN III 49,9; AN IV 208,23; AN IV 212,22; as the best of those who give pleasant gifts: AN I 26,11. In the list of ten outstanding upāsakas and upāsikās in AN I 26, only some are referred to as gahapati. Only these are considered here.

<sup>55.</sup> See SN IV 281,25; SN IV 283,23; SN IV 285,20; SN IV 289,1; SN IV 291,15; SN IV 293,4; SN IV 296,1; SN IV 298,3; SN IV 300,10; SN IV 302,21; as the best of dhamma-teachers: AN I 26,5.

<sup>56.</sup> See AN I 88,23; as model gahapatis: SN II 235,21; as model upāsakas: AN II 164,14.

<sup>57.</sup> He is the best of those who wait for the Sangha: AN I 26,12.

<sup>58.</sup> See AN III 450,23; AN IV 438,15.

<sup>59.</sup> See MN I 349,10; AN V 342,17.

<sup>60.</sup> See AN II 61,20; AN III 295,15 (see also under gahaṭṭha); AN IV 268,4; AN IV 348,4; as the best of those who converse intimately: AN I 16,25.

<sup>61.</sup> See SN III 48,8; SN IV 113,16.

he becomes a Buddhist lay follower.<sup>62</sup> The texts report that some *gahapatis* have reached certain stages on the Buddhist spiritual path, such as that of a "stream-enterer" (*sotāpanna*)<sup>63</sup> and a "non-returner" (*anāgāmin*).<sup>64</sup> One passage has a list of named *gahapatis* who have realized the "deathless" (*amata*).<sup>65</sup>

It is also important to note that gahapati frequently appears as a vocative used by the Buddha to address the conversation partner in the course of a dialog (which is counted here only once for every narrative context). While this normally remains without further comment, in one curious passage a certain Potaliva complains that the Buddha calls him gahapati. He says that he had given up all obligations and occupations (sabbe kammantā patikkhittā sabbe vohārā samucchinnā) by handing his wealth over to his sons. But the Buddha replies that in the discipline of the Noble One (ariyasse vinaye), giving up occupations means eight items of moral behavior and more—up to arahantship. In the end, Potaliya takes refuge and becomes an upāsaka (not a bhikkhu!) (MN I 350,12). Persons that are otherwise identified as upāsakas are regularly addressed as gahapatis, also in groups. 66 Some addressees have particular occupations like a carpenter (thapati), 67 a farmer (kassaka), 68 or a village headman (gāmaṇī) (SN IV 315,11).69 The term is also used within families, when a woman addresses her husband as gahapati (MN II 62,18; see also AN III 296,8), and their son, now a bhikkhu, his father (MN II 62,27).

The gahapati and the ascetic are implicitly juxtaposed in phrases that describe a gahapati's going-forth. In a common phrase a gahapati or his son or

<sup>62.</sup> See MN I 374,15. See also the gahapati who is a follower of the Åjīvakas ( $\bar{a}j\bar{v}akas\bar{a}vaka$ ), then talks to the Buddha and becomes an  $up\bar{a}saka$  (AN I 217,24).

<sup>63.</sup> Anāthapiņdika: SN V 380,19; SN V 385,14; SN V 387,17.

<sup>64.</sup> Sirivaḍḍha:  $SN \ V \ 176,14$ ; Mānadinna;  $SN \ V \ 178,3$ . The  $up\bar{a}saka$  Dīghāvu, who is later identified by the Buddha as a non-returner, is sick and sends his father, the gahapati Jotika, to ask for the Buddha's visit:  $SN \ V \ 34$ .

<sup>65.</sup> Bhallika, Sudatta, Anāthapiṇḍika, Citta Macchikāsaṇḍika, Hatthaka Āļavaka, Mahānāma Sakka, Ugga Vesālika, Uggata, Sūra Ambaṭṭha, Jīvaka Komārabhacca, Nakulapitā, Tavakaṇṇika, Pūraṇa, Isidatta, Sandhāna, Vijaya, Vajjiyamāhita, Meṇḍaka (AN III 451.9). See also MN II 173,32, where a gahapati or his son examines a monk concerning the monk's states of greed, hatred, and delusion; only then he trusts him and learns the dhamma from him and awakens to truth (saccānubodha).

<sup>66.</sup> See DN II 85,13; AN V 58,21; Ud 86,25.

<sup>67.</sup> See MN I 396,30; MN III 145,30.

<sup>68.</sup> See ANI 229,32; ANI 239,28; ANI 241,31.

<sup>69.</sup> The name of the *gahapati-putta* Kevaddha has the variant Kevaṭṭa (fisherman) (*DN* I 211,4).

someone from the family (gahapati vā gahapati-putto vā añāatarasmiṃ vā kule) hears the dhamma and decides to leave home for homelessness. To It is particularly noted when a very wealthy (mahaddhana mahābhoga) gahapati or gahapatiputta gives up all his wealth and goes forth (MNI 451,36). Another implicit juxtaposition is present in descriptions of the relationship between house residents and the saṅgha. As householders, gahapatis provide the Buddhist monks—other ascetics are not mentioned in this usage—with food, robes, lodging, and medicine; Toften they are called devoted (saddhā gahapatikā). As seen above, we regularly encounter affluent gahapatis in the texts Jagaining wealth is regarded as their aim (AN III 363,9). It is taken for granted that they enjoy sensual pleasures, and only a very few passages make a negative value judgement about their way of life. In fact, in talking about gahapatis the texts tone is generally benevolent and caring, and the gahapatis concerns are taken seriously.

<sup>70.</sup> DN I 62,33; DN I 250,8; MN I 179,9; MN I 267,21; MN I 344,27; AN II 208,19; AN V 204,14. It is a fruit of sāmañña when a gahapati becomes a monk and is respected as such (DN I 61,22).

<sup>71.</sup> See MN I 369,17; MN II 7,16; SN II 202,14; AN I 274,7. Sometimes the Buddha simply instructs gahapatis and gahapatāniya who travel the same road (AN II 57,17). See also the way the Buddha describes the "three fires" of āhuneyyaggi (for father and mother), gahapataggi (for family, workers, and servants), dakkhineyyaggi (for samaṇa-brāhmaṇā) (AN IV 45,1; see also DN III 217,20).

<sup>72.</sup> See MN I 222,3; MN I 448,10; MN I 461,12; AN II 125,1; AN V 350,5.

<sup>73.</sup> See SN III 112,28; AN I 117,1; AN V 40,6; a wealthy merchant (setthi) gahapati in SN I 89,32 and SN I 91,28. One passage says that to a bhikkhu, the rag robe is what a chest full of garments is to a gahapati or gahapatiputta (AN IV 230,24).

<sup>74.</sup> See MN I 461,27; MN I 505,3; AN IV 55,17.

<sup>75.</sup> The Buddha puts it mildly when he remarks that gahapatis and gahapatiputtas, despite their luxurious houses, sleep badly because of disturbances caused by greed, hatred, and delusion, while he himself sleeps well because he has overcome those (AN I 137,17). Another passage says that unlike an otherwise-gentle female householder (gahapatānī) who is provoked by her slave and gets mad at her, monks should be gentle in a deeper way (MN I 125,4; see also MN II 106,4). In a polemical passage directed at the non-Buddhist ascetic Kassapa, the Buddha claims that the latter's ascetic practices could easily be performed by a gahapati, his son, or even a slave girl carrying a water-jar—in contrast to living a life as a Buddhist bhikkhu (DN I 168,24). Probably the most explicit contrast made between ascetic and gahapati is found in a passage about a bhikkhu who sees a gahapati or a gahapatiputta enjoying sense pleasures and then returns to the "low life" (hīnāyāvattati) (AN II 125,16).

<sup>76.</sup> The Buddha says that a "son of good family" (kulaputta) should associate with virtuous and wise gahapatis or gahapatiputtas (AN IV 282,9; AN IV 286,18; AN IV 323,13). In making a point about lying, he brings up the case that a person ruined a gahapati or gahapatiputta with false speech (AN III 210,18; SN IV 247,23). And he declares that the danger in singing rather than reciting the dhamma is that gahāpatikā may complain that the monks sing just

#### Conclusion

The starting point of this chapter's discussion was Stephanie Jamison's assumption (Ch. 1, this volume) that the term <code>grhastha</code> may have been borrowed by the Brahmins from the śramaṇic discourse of the time with its pronounced distinction between householders and ascetics. Has surveying the usage of the most frequent terms for house residents in early Pāli texts yielded any insights that would help to test this hypothesis? I wish to couch my conclusion in a somewhat playful way. Let us imagine, most presumptuously and only for a moment, that we were Brahmanical legal scholars of the third century <code>BCE</code> looking for inspiration in our pursuit to coin what would become the most central category of our ideology. Let us also imagine, most inadequately, that the presented usage of terms in the early Pāli texts somewhat represented the śramaṇic discourse of that time. Considering the findings of this chapter, which one of the three terms would we Brahmins find most appealing?

Clearly, gahapati/grhapati would not be high on our list. Not only might it create internal discomfort within the Brahmanical discourse, as Jamison argues, but the Buddhist use is rather unattractive too. The term is associated with householders who, as a group in society, most often appear separate from Brahmins; it regularly refers to Buddhist lay followers who are in a close relationship with the Sangha; and it is never used as an idea or a concept that sets the gahapati fundamentally apart from the ascetic. The term gihin/grhin works much better in this respect because it is more abstract. It is used as a generic, highly normative category that emphasizes the (non-pabbajita) status of house residents. However, in this concept a gihin is generally presented as being inferior to the pabbajita and as a person who is supposed to carry out a variety of duties for the ascetics. When they appear in groups, gihins are a faceless and nameless mass. All this—and the fact that gihin never seems to refer to a Brahmin—does not make the term very attractive either. That leaves us with gahattha/grhastha. Unlike gahapati, it is used conceptually in the contrastive pair of house resident and ascetic, but it is less ideologically charged than gihin. It is generally not as specifically defined as the other two and has both positive and negative connotations, neither one of which is very strong. In fact, its sparsity in the texts may be regarded as an advantage since it is the least specific and the most flexible of the three terms.

like them (AN III 251.5). Elsewhere I argued that depicting gahapatis as spiritually accomplished and generally in a positive way—especially in contrast to gihins—might have been an attempt to attract affluent members of society who self-identified as gahapatis in the sense of an influential group in society (Freiberger 2018).

Clearly, none of this provides hard evidence to verify the hypothesis that third-century BCE Brahmins borrowed the term <code>gahattha/grhastha</code> from the śramaṇīc discourse of the time. But if—and that is a big "if"—the earliest extant Pāli texts represent one expression of the third-century śramaṇic discourse, and if the Brahmins did want to reinterpret the śramaṇic contrastive pair of ascetic and householder in favor of the latter, <code>gahattha/grhastha</code> would have suggested itself more strongly than any other term.

Appendix

Quantitative Distribution of Attested Terms

	DN	MN	SN	AN	Dh	Ud	It	Sn	Total
gahapati	38	47	47	88		2	1	1	224
gihin	10	9	12	26	1	2	1	4	65
gahaṭṭha	_	4	2	12	1		2	6	27
gharāvāsa	2	6	2	3	_	1	_	1	15
agārik/y/ abhūta	_	_	2	4		2	-	_	8
gharamesin		_			_		1	1	2
gharaṭṭha		_					1		I
agārin		_			_	1			I

Unattested in this corpus are: \*agāraṭṭh°, \*agārapat°, \*agārames°, \*agāravās°, \*agāravās°, kuṭimbik°, kuṭimbik°, kuṭumbik°, kuṭumbik°, kuṭumbir°, \*gahames°, \*gahavās°, \*gahāvās°, \*gihaṭṭh°, \*gihapat°, \*gihames°, \*gihavās°, \*gihāvās°, \*gehaṭṭh°, \*gehapat°, \*gehames°, \*gehavās°, \*gehāvās°, \*gharapat°, \*gharavās°.