

# Problems Faced by the Women in the Ancient Indian Society as Revealed in the Therīgāthā

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The bhikkhunī order was established five years after the bhikkhu order of monks was established, at the request of a group of women whose spokesperson was Mahaprajāpatī Gotamī, the step mother who raised the Prince Siddhartha after his mother's demise. The Buddha categorically granted their request, understanding the capability to realize the spiritual goals envisaged by his teachings. The Therīgāthā, the ninth book of the Khuddaka Nikāya, consists of 73 poems, 522 stanzas in all in which the early bhikkhunis recount their struggles and accomplishments along the road to Arahantship. Their stories are told with often heart-breaking honesty and beauty, revealing the in-depth humane side of these extraordinary women, and thus serve as inspiring reminders of our own potential to follow in their footsteps. The Vedic and Brāhmanic dispensation assigned women to the lowest status of the society and in the objective of this research to assess favourably the opportunity and impels given to them to retrieve themselves and thus was a solace and boon to them. In that era unlimited suffering was the concern of woman as wife, mother, and housewife etc., The huge relief as described in the Therigatha was the bliss in the Buddhist teaching that mercifully drove the disciple through Nirvāna. In today's world when the rigors of lay-life was found tortures, some women opt to follow the Path of the Buddha for in search of relief from sorrow. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the magnitude of the bliss of women in the nun hood as described in Therigatha. The research methodology here is guided by literary sources, primary source being the Therīgāthā and secondary the analyses of the commentaries and other materials dealing with the subject.

**Key words:** *Buddhism, India, Bhikkhunīs, Women, Problems.*