

(These questions are designed to launch a discussion about the outstanding women in our lives. Ideally, meditators should form a circle and engage in deep listening at these stories are recounted. More topics will most likely naturally emerge from this platform of stillness coupled with giving and receiving.)

Facilitator Questions

1st Annual International Bhikkhuni Day

September 17, 2011

1. This 1st Annual International Bhikkhuni Day is honoring the recognized founder of the Bhikkhuni Sangha, Ven. Bhikkhuni Maha Pajapati Theri. Not only did she protect the developing Bhikkhuni Sangha, but she also mothered and taught the Buddha. She was his first spiritual teacher, a key person in developing and encouraging the best in him. *What woman in your life was your first spiritual teacher? What woman brought out the best in you?* It could be your mother or could be another woman, a grandmother, an aunt, older sister, or teacher. Can you tell a story or two about her which captures her personality and conveys how she touched your life and the lives of others?
2. Were there other women who impacted your spiritual development as well? If so, who are they and how were they pivotal? What made them inspiring?
3. Perhaps some of your women teachers are not women you have met but are women whose books you have read or histories you have studied. If you count some of these women as your teachers, who are they and why are you drawn to them? What about them set them apart?
4. Mahapajapati advocated for the vulnerable women who fell under her protection. Has any compassionate, strong woman been an advocate for you, protected you? If so, how?
5. Do you see yourself becoming a mentor and advocate for women? Can you talk about that?
6. Perhaps the people who mothered and nourished you were men — your father, grandfather, brother or uncle? Can you speak about their kindness, tenderness, love, and belief in you?

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