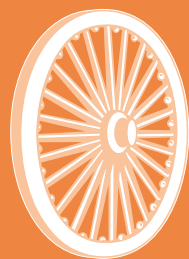


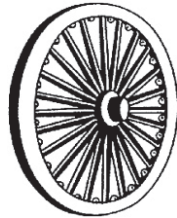
How To Defend The Republic



Vipassana Research Institute

How To Defend The Republic

Acharya S. N. Goenka



Vipassana Research Institute
Dhammagiri, Igatpuri 422 403

HOW TO DEFEND THE REPUBLIC

(The following is a translation and adaptation of a Hindi article by S. N. Goenka published by the Vipassana Research Institute in December 2003.)

It was the first year of the dispensation of the Dhamma. After attaining full enlightenment at Bodh Gaya and setting in motion the Wheel of Dhamma at Varanasi, the Buddha came to Rājagaha passing through Bodh Gaya on the way. Here, Licchavi Mahāli, the commander of the Vajjian republic, met the Buddha. He benefited from his teaching and became his first Licchavi disciple. Inspired by him, many Licchavis of Vesālī became devoted disciples of the Buddha within a few days.

Mahāli's skill in the art of warfare made the army of Vesālī a major force in the region. Unfortunately, he lost both his eyes. The Licchavis had great respect for him. Therefore, they appointed him as their chief military adviser and designated a brilliant Licchavi youth named Siha as the commander of the army.

At that time, Siha was a prominent disciple of another spiritual teacher. However, when he saw that many Licchavis of Vesālī had become the followers of the Buddha, he too came, after initial hesitation, to meet the Buddha out of curiosity. After meeting the Buddha, he was deeply influenced and became his devoted follower. Like Mahāli, Siha fulfilled the responsibility of commanding the army with great skill and diligence even after becoming a follower of the Buddha. The Buddha did not teach his lay devotees to neglect their social and professional responsibilities. On the contrary, he encouraged them to gain more proficiency in them.

Once the Buddha was staying at the Sārandada Shrine in Vesālī. Many Licchavis came to meet him and after paying