

ROME REPORT 2014

December 17, 2014

I, as a stonemason from Tibet, for the first time, am visiting the ancient city of Rome, Italy known for thousands of massive, impressive marble and granite stone structures. We saw the Vatican, the Basilica and then to the Coliseum and many others.

The stone work and art here with so many carved columns and statues is so amazing. As a man who has worked with stone, I know how fantastic the work of these ancient craftsmen was.

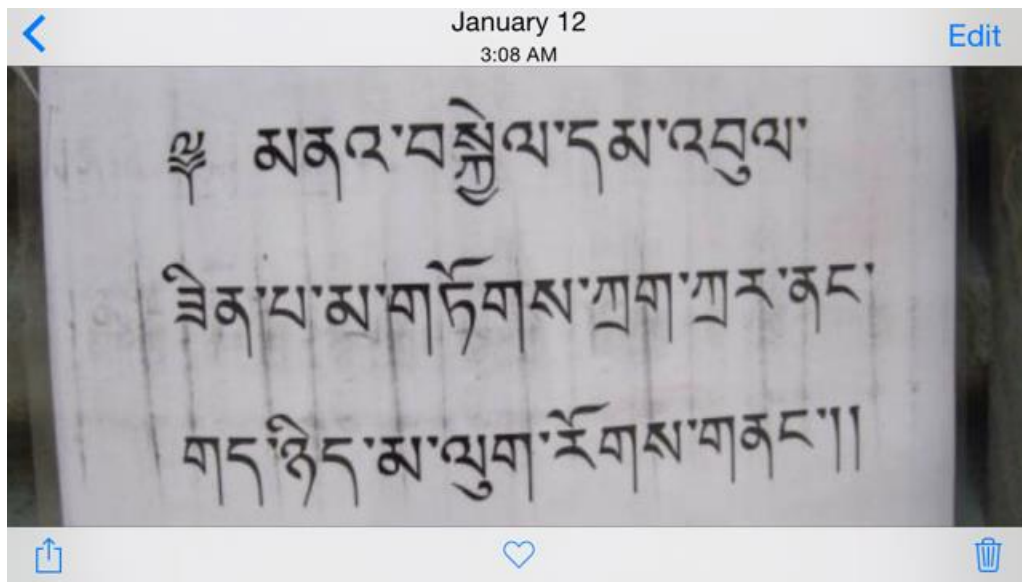
I almost forgot the purpose of my coming to Rome. I was there to participate in an awareness event against the current ban on Dorje Shugden practitioners and segregation by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama was in Rome to celebrate with other recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize but he was the only one who is facing protests by his own people.

I was told that we had received permission to protest for only two days not all three full days because the Dalai Lama's family is close friends with the Mayor of Rome. So the Mayor limited our protest to only two days.

But that did not affect me because it gave me a chance to explore the ancient ruins and art and stonework and the opportunity to see Rome and the Vatican.

While listening to our guide there I understood that the Vatican places are free for anyone to come and visit! So, as a Buddhist it occurred to me that I was able to enter and visit these old Christian churches but we now cannot enter into Tibetan temples, monasteries, and libraries.

We are even prevented to enter restaurants, shops and we see signs at the public dump that say, “If you still practice Dorje Shugden or if you have anything to do with Dorje Shugden practitioners, you must take your garbage somewhere else”.



THE SEGREGATION SIGN AT THE DUMPSTER AT TIBETAN SETTLEMENT BYLAKUPPE, INDIA

The Dalai Lama has ordered signs posted in front of all these places including his palace gate denying entry to any who practice Dorje Shugden. So, here I am in Rome and witnessing the freedom of western religions to visit their special places and wondering how can the Dalai Lama who accepted his Nobel Peace Prize now enforce segregation and religious persecution in his own community?

I then went to visit the Coliseum and marveled at the stone work there, too. We found that this place was where the emperors brought unbelievers to face wild animals like lions and tigers while the people in the stands cheered as the infidels fought among themselves and then were eaten by the wild animals.

While we have been hosting awareness events of the ban these past few months in many sites around the United States and Canada, attended by the Dalai Lama, we have been insulted, yelled obscenities at, spit on and told that we were unworthy by the supporters and staff of the Dalai Lama's office. After all the insults, the Dalai Lama thanked his supporters and said they did a good thing. It occurred to me that if it were possible, if the Dalai Lama had the same powers as the kings and emperors, there is no doubt he would do the same thing to us and maybe he would enjoy watching also from his throne.

In those days the people were made to chant, "Long Live the King!!" to intimidate the people. Now the Dalai Lama's supporters shout loudly and try to intimidate us and hold up banners saying, "Long Live the Dalai Lama!" in the same way.

The ISC (The International Shugden Community) were not permitted to host our awareness events the first day. But they obtained permission to sing, but for only five or six people each group.

So they organized many groups in several public places in front of the Vatican and other public entrances with a donation hat in front and singing, "Please Dalai Lama Stop Lying". The singing was very beautifully done and large crowds gathered to listen.

The second day we got on the bus at 7 a.m. and went to the protest site which was only a couple miles from our hotel and a half mile from where the events of the Dalai Lama were happening.

Then I have to say that I thought Rome's Mayor was trying to favor his friend over the freedom of speech by limiting our activities and keeping us as far away as possible. Perhaps, he might be trying to return some favor from the Dalai Lama? Then I learned that both Dalai Lama and his sister were made honorary citizens of Italy from the Mayor.

It is clear though that Italy's democracy has worked well for us, the ISC. We have been able to speak out and express our views. So many people from the media came to us to cover our view as never before. The media coverage was very good here. Several major papers and other media outlets covered our events.

For me, most interesting interaction was with two people while I was offering information and brochures. They showed me their phone with the Dalai Lama's photo. After our conversation they told me that they were staying in the same hotel as the Dalai Lama. The hotel was very luxurious and expensive and the Dalai Lama had many people surrounding him with expensive suits and dresses and partying. The woman said, "How can he afford all these things when he claims to be a simple monk and a Tibetan refugee?" There must be something wrong here. Now we are standing in the street asking to end religious segregation. She thanks me and said she would help us and took many brochures and information packets. She said, "Now I know the truth about the Dalai Lama".

Our campaign and hard work is beginning to have an effect and to be worthwhile. The world is beginning to see the truth about the Dalai Lama.

The Third Day we started early at six a.m. and I didn't get breakfast or even coffee. We got on the bus and went to the site. It was only one block from where the Dalai Lama's party was happening

I went to get myself some breakfast and a coffee at a place on the corner. Before I could pull out my wallet some young Tibetan came up. He had already paid my bill. That happened a few times after again and again. So, clearly, people who

practice Dorje Shugden help and care for each other. The second day's dinner was sponsored by people from Dorje Shugden.com, a platform which strives to educate and create awareness about Dorje Shugden and the plight his practitioners are facing.

During the events in Rome, the media coverage was very, very good. Even some well-known musician, Romina Power, spoke saying the Dalai Lama is a liar. Most media were covering us including AP News and many Italian agencies and newspapers and television networks. Rai News 24 and others were amazing. believe.

During the demonstration in New York City, the Dalai Lama supporters said that ISC protesters will not last more than five years because they will run out of money. But if this continues, the Dalai Lama's reputation will run out sooner than ISC's money. It is clearly the Dalai Lama's reputation is fading. The Dalai Lama and his agents tried to meet the Pope desperately but the Pope did not waste his time to meet him. The Pope must realize that the Dalai Lama is a hypocrite. Members of the ISC all pay their own way so it is not likely that the effort will run out of money. We work overtime to pay our way. The day ends with all Dorje Shugden practitioners feeling proud and happy about their efforts to stop segregation and persecution and stand up for religious freedom. We all know this is a very good cause.

Please support and join us on our next awareness events in Basel, Switzerland on February 6-8 and then in Trondheim, Norway on February 9th and then in Copenhagen, Denmark from February 11 to 12th.

We look forward to seeing you then.

Sonam Lama from Sonam's Stonewalls.



DEMONSTRATORS SINGING ABOUT DALAI LAMA LYING



DEMONSTRATORS SHOWING EVIDENCE OF SEGREGATION



**TASHI PHUNTSOG, PRESIDENT OF DORJE SHUGDEN ASSOCIATION
WITH LOBSANG DORJE FORMER PRESIDENT OF NGA AND
SONAM RINCHEN TIBETAN SPOKESMAN FOR ISC**



THE COLISEUM OF ROME



SONAM LAMA MEETING THE PRESS