

Your Holiness,

I am writing on behalf of an environmentalist association from Trentino, a region in Northern Italy where you have always been welcomed which we know you appreciate for its administrative and legislative autonomy.

Our association was founded in Trento in 2004, with the aim of facing the problem of waste mismanagement. Waste management has never been handled properly since modern society has always considered it a “dirty” thing not to be looked at, to be hidden, without ever assessing the risks generated by waste mismanagement.

This scarce consideration for waste, persisting ever since plastic got a footing, has degenerated, turning into a situation of emergency, with which governments have justified the construction of incinerators.

In Trentino as well, for a few years, our “leaders” are trying to justify the construction of an incinerator. The opposition carried out by our association has been able to show, over time, how little waste can be produced (and it is waste only because it cannot be sorted) when a correct and careful waste sorting is being brought about. At the end of 2008, our province has sorted nearly 70% of waste. At this rate, bearing in mind the objective of non-incineration and how new and developing technologies do not burn waste thanks to a high recycling cycle, Trentino, as well as anybody else, can contribute to fighting global warming and to regenerating the conscience of all sentient beings.

The awareness of our limited natural resources that are used to satisfy humankind’s need, of how desertification is becoming a serious and widespread problem, of how air, soil and water pollution is reaching unacceptable levels all leads us to firmly contrast waste incineration. Facing the problem has generated other broader reflections which we think might interest the Buddhist world as well. These reflections have brought us on different paths of knowledge which lead to an only destination: awareness.

Knowledge concerns several aspects of the matter: a thoughtless consumption of raw, non-renewable materials; the irresponsible compulsion of consuming; being a victim of materialism, therefore of worldly things; the evaluation of people according to the amount of things they consume, thus the waste they produce; the continuous yearning for possessing something, thus endless dissatisfaction; the exploitation of natural resources by only one part of the world to the detriment of all humankind.

People must then bear in mind that, by burning materials, a serious and irreparable damage to the ecology of the planet and to the humankind is brought about. But the most serious damage is the one perpetrated towards the essence of man: producing and burning waste means preventing people to walk along the path of consciousness, to understand the seriousness of their behaviour for themselves, for people and the entire universe. It means keeping people in a state of fear and ignorance with the aim of “governing“ the masses more easily according the needs of only a few individuals.

We have had the chance to experiment on our consciences the soundness of these reflections. The studies carried out over the years have allowed us to grow until we have reached the awareness that through the knowledge of our relationship with waste we can act and consume consciously. Furthermore, we have realised how this awareness is being firmly opposed by those who build their existence on materialism.

The reason why we address you, Your Holiness, is that in attempting to overcome the opposition toward evolution of the sentient people: we ask you to launch a strong and clear message against incineration in defence of Creation. It should not be a defence limited to only “words and intentions”, but a practical defence. It is that necessary such an important and wise person like You, Your Holiness admonish and reprimand governments, especially that of Trentino, so that the profound need for walking the new path of realizing the awareness of interdependence among all elements of nature will deepen in everyone’s intimacy.

I conclude this letter with the hope of meeting you personally during your next trip to Italy, why not in our beautiful Trentino.

Your sincerely

Simonetta Gabrielli
President of Nimby trentino – NPO

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