

Appendix 4: “Why I Won’t Send You to the Municipal Kindergarten”



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I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I don't want you to broaden your experience in a stimulating environment, but because I want you to be a Tibetan child in more than just name.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I do not see the value of pre-school education, but because I am not comfortable with a principal telling an audience that “A Tibetan-speaking child is not a good child.”

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I ignore the merits of studying a variety of subjects, but because I fear the onslaught of mainstream education will shatter the enunciation of the alphabet which is our life-force.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I cannot think how much you enjoy playing with kids your own age, but because I am scared that their heedlessness will irreversibly degrade the wholesome ways of our forefathers.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I don't appreciate the beauty of fancy classrooms and nice playgrounds, but because I want to set my inescapable responsibility to you straight.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because I do not respect and admire the abilities of trained teachers, but because I call you by a true Tibetan clan name with a certain cultural background.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

not because of any idea that it is all right not to learn the majority language, or any partiality at all, but because it scares me that the time will come when you cannot communicate with the elders in your own homeland, and can barely read or write our recorded history.

In short, I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten because being the head of a household, I like to think I know best.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

because of the miniature Tibetan gown that mother lovingly made for you, and the little "Speak and Write" books that father got for you.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

because of the sight of the grassland spangled with wildflowers, herds of sheep and yak grazing, and smoke rising from the black tents.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

out of affection for the constant melody of grandpa and grandma's *mani* recitations, devoted to the enlightenment of all beings.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

so that you are nourished by the milk of the white-coated yak cow and the whiteness of fresh Tsampa.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

wishing our family members to declare without reservation before the tombs of our ancestors that "I am your descendant."

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

because Jomolangma is the crown jewel of mountains, and the Potala palace is so magnificent.

I won't send you to the municipal kindergarten

especially because I want to take an interest in everything you are learning, and be in charge of what children are told in the classroom.



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Beloved daughter of my dreams, you are my star fallen from heaven, my flower plucked from the earth, my one jewel from the human world – and I want your warmth to spread and your light to shine. For one as small as you, father’s strong wishes may seem too much, but the time will come, when you are older, when my wishes will be clear to you, [and you will] understand that all of this is part of an inescapable predicament, a noble burden to be shouldered without weariness or resentment, so that a community with the courage to stand up for its people can welcome you in, and the lord of refuge rich in blessing and miracles can protect you.

This father-tongue and mother-script in which my outer, inner and secret mind is steeped, may they live forever! The customs and devotion in which my body of flesh and blood is clothed, may they last forever and ever!

Written by Do-lho Drengbu, at the start of the first month of autumn [August 22, 2017], at [name withheld] primary school. Translated by Human Rights Watch.