

When a man goes to school, he cannot be certain that he will become an official. But whether he becomes an official or not, he should make up his mind to study. If one fails in the examinations, the knowledge gained still remains his own and it should not be regarded as a losing investment. I, for instance, have become successful and am reputed to have a good knowledge of books. But when I ask myself, I cannot say how many books I have really absorbed into my heart. All we do usually is to borrow from one book and adapt from others. Thus gaining a reputation by cheating. The scholars owe a debt to the books, while the books owe nothing to them.

## 林语堂中英对照丛书

凡人读书，原拿不定发达。然即不发达，要不可以不读书，主意便拿定也。科名不来，学问在我，原不是折本的买卖。愚兄而今已发达矣，人亦共称愚兄为善读书矣，究竟自问胸中担得出几卷书来？不过那移借贷，改窜添补，便尔钓名欺世。人有负于书耳，书亦何负于人哉！



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# 板桥家书

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百花文艺出版社

BAIHUA LITERATURE AND  
ART PUBLISHING HOUSE

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## 出版说明

林语堂是享誉中外的文学家和翻译家，他的国学根底与翻译水准堪称双绝。本套丛书各篇均为林语堂所选与林语堂所译。以中文名篇与英文名译两相对照，可谓珠联璧合。

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板桥家书

郑板桥

一、雍正十年杭州韬光庵中寄舍弟墨

谁非黄帝尧舜之子孙，而至于今日，其不幸而为臧获、为婢妾、为舆台、皂隶，窘穷迫逼，无可奈何。非其数十代以前即自臧获婢妾舆台皂隶来也。一旦奋发有为，精勤不倦，有及身而富贵者矣，有及其子孙而富贵者矣，王侯将相岂有种乎！而一二失路名

## Family Letters of a Chinese Poet

### 1. To Brother Mo, From Taokuang Temple, Hangchow, Written In 1732

There is no one in the world who is not a descendant of the Yellow Emperor, and Yao and Shun. But today some have unfortunately become slaves, slave girls, concubines, drudge and lowly laborers, living in poverty and distress and unable to help themselves; it would be wrong to assume that their ancestors were slaves, slave girls, concubines, drudge and lowly laborers in generations ago. Once they make up their minds and are willing to work hard, some of them become rich and honored in their own life time, and others become so in the next generation. Is there such a thing as blood among kings, dukes, premiers and generals? <sup>1</sup>Some scions of

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1. Current proverb: "There is no blood in premiers and generals."

家，落魄贵胄，借祖宗以欺人，述先代而自大。辄曰：彼何人也，反在霄汉；我何人也，反在泥涂。天道不可凭，人事不可问。嗟乎！不知此正所谓天道人事也。天道福善祸淫，彼善而富贵，尔淫而贫贱，理也，庸何伤？天道循环倚伏，彼祖宗贫贱，今当富贵，尔祖宗富贵，今当贫贱，理也，又何伤？天道如此，人事即在其中矣。

愚兄为秀才时，检家中旧书箧，得前代家奴契券，即于灯下焚去，并不返诸其人。

former noble or well - known families taunt others on their birth and brag about their previous generations, saying, "Who is he, and yet he is high up? I am such and such a person, and yet I am down and out. There is no justice in heaven or in the affairs of man." Alas! they do not know that this is exactly the justice of heaven and of human affairs. Heaven rewards the good and punishes the licentious; it is in accordance with reason that he is good and therefore rewarded, and you are licentious and therefore poor. What is wrong with that? For the way of Heaven goes in a cycle. His ancestors were poor, and now it is his turn to be rich and honored; your ancestors were rich and honored, and now it is your turn to be poor. Again, what is wrong about that? This is the way of heaven and also of human affairs.

After I, your foolish brother, became a government graduate (hsiuts' ai), whenever I found in the old trunks at our home some deed of a slave sold into our family in the former generation, I at once burned it over the oil lamp. I did not even return it to the person

恐明与之，反多一番形迹，增一番愧慙。自我用人，从不书券，合则留，不合则去。何苦存此一纸，使吾后世子孙，借为口实，以便苛求抑勒乎！如此存心，是为人处，即是为己处。若事事预留把柄，使入其网罗，无能逃脱，其穷愈速，其祸即来，其子孙即有不可问之事、不可测之忧。试看世间会打算的，何曾打算得别人一点，直是算尽自家耳！可哀可叹，吾弟识之。

concerned, for I felt if I did, it would be an obvious act and increase the man's embarrassment. Since I began to employ people, I have never required contracts. If we can get along with the servant, we keep him; and if not, we send him away. Why keep such a piece of paper to provide a pretext for our next generations to use it as a claim or a means of extortion? To act with such a heart is to have consideration for others, which is to have consideration for ourselves. If one tries always to obtain a legal hold, traps others into the meshes of legality, not allowing them to get out again, one will only become poor more quickly and disaster will follow immediately. The posterity of such people will soon be involved in scandals and meet with unexpected disasters. You just look at the people of the world who are shrewd at calculations; do they ever succeed in overcoming others by their shrewd calculations? They are only calculating toward their own ruin. What a pity! Remember this, my younger brother.



## 二、焦山读书寄四弟墨

僧人遍满天下，不是西域送来的。即吾中国之父兄子弟，穷而无归，入而难返者也。削去头发便是他，留起头发还是我。怒眉瞋目，叱为异端而深恶痛绝之，亦觉太过。佛自周昭王时下生，迄于灭度，足迹未尝履中国土。后八百年而有汉明帝，说谎说梦，惹出这场事来，佛实不闻不晓。今不责