

 房龙经典·英文原版

VAN LOON'S GEOGRAPHY

THE STORY OF THE PACIFIC

房龙地理·太平洋的故事

❀ 英文原版 ❀

[美] 房 龙 ○ 著



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CHINA CITY PRESS



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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

房龙地理·太平洋的故事: 英文/(美) 房龙著. —北京: 中国城市出版社, 2009. 1

ISBN 978 - 7 - 5074 - 2064 - 7

I. 房… II. 房… III. ①英语—语言读物②社会地理学—世界—通俗读物③太平洋—普及读物 IV. H319.4; C H319.4; P

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2008) 第 174197 号

选题策划 徐昌强 (greatbook@sina.com 13661335586)
责任编辑 华 风
装帧设计 美信书籍设计工作室
责任技术编辑 张建军
出版发行 中国城市出版社
地 址 北京市海淀区太平路甲 40 号 (邮编 100039)
网 址 www.citypress.cn
发行部电话 (010) 63454857 63289949
发行部传真 (010) 63421417 63400635
发行部信箱 zgcsfx@sina.com
编辑部电话 (010) 52732085 52732055 63421488 (Fax)
投稿信箱 city_editor@sina.com
总编室电话 (010) 52732057
总编室信箱 citypress@sina.com
经 销 新华书店
印 刷 北京集惠印刷有限责任公司
字 数 890 千字 印张 27.5
开 本 787 × 1092 (毫米) 1/16
版 次 2009 年 1 月第 1 版
印 次 2009 年 1 月第 1 次印刷
定 价 38.00 元

出版前言

亨 德里克·威廉·房龙 (Hendrik Willem van Loon, 1882 - 1944), 著名荷兰裔美国作家、历史学家、科普作家和文学家。

房龙于 1882 年 1 月出生于荷兰鹿特丹。幼年时期的房龙由于家庭内部暴力而感受不到温暖, 8 岁就进入寄宿学校, 10 岁起沉溺于史学。20 岁以后, 房龙到美国康奈尔大学、德国慕尼黑大学求学, 获得博士学位, 但他并没有成为书斋里的学究。他当过编辑、记者和老师, 屡经漂泊, 同时苦练写作。房龙还是个多才多艺的人, 从小就对历史、地理、船舶、绘画和音乐感兴趣, 而且终生未曾放弃。他能用 10 种文字写作并与人交流, 还拉得一手小提琴, 善绘画, 他著作中几乎所有的插图都是自己绘制。

1921 年, 房龙出版《人类的故事》, 使他一举成名, 从此迎来了创作的丰收期。之后, 《发明的故事》、《圣经的故事》、《美国的故事》、《房龙地理》(又名《人类的家园》)、《人类的艺术》、《宽容》(又名《人类的解放》)、《与世界伟人谈心》、《伦勃朗传》、《荷兰共和国兴衰史》、《太平洋的故事》等几十部著作陆续出版, 几乎本本畅销, 饮誉世界, 许多国家都翻译出版了他的作品。可以说, 房龙一生出版的 30 余种著作, 将人类各方面的历史几乎全都复述了一遍。

房龙在学问和文学上坚持文人主义的立场, 并逐渐形成了一套自己的理解和表达方式。他认为: “凡学问一到穿上专家的拖鞋, 躲进了它的‘精舍’, 而把它鞋子上的泥土作肥料去的时候, 它就宣布自己预备死了。与人隔绝的知识生活是引到毁灭去的。”因此, 深入浅出地将艰深枯燥的学问化作轻松风趣的精神食粮, 成了房龙作品的显著特征。

房龙的作品基本围绕人类生存与发展的最本质问题, 贯穿其中的精神是

科学、宽容和进步，其目标是向人类的无知与偏见挑战，从而将知识和真理普及为人所共知的常识。

当然，由于房龙坚持人文主义立场，在有些问题上不免有失偏颇甚至谬误；同时，由于他的生活时代所限，使他在有些问题上的见解不可避免地受到局限，如他在《房龙地理》中错误地将西藏放到“中亚高地”，而不是放到“中国”这一章来讲述；又比如，他以地理环境决定论来解释日本近代的侵略行为。所有这些，读者在阅读时当然能够甄别。

房龙的主要作品在20世纪20年代就开始被介绍给我国读者。历史学家和著名报人曹聚仁回忆说，他早年曾在一次候车时偶然买到《人类的故事》中译本，“那天下午，我发痴似的，车来了，在车上读，到了家中，把晚饭吞下去，就靠在床上读，一直读到天明，走马观花地总算看完了。这50年中，我总是看了又看，除了《儒林外史》、《红楼梦》，没有其他的书这么吸引我了”。我国著名文学家郁达夫也曾评价房龙的作品说：“房龙的笔，有一种魔力……是将文学家的手法，拿来用以讲述科学……无论大人小孩，读他书的人都觉得娓娓忘倦了。”

房龙作品在我国至今仍然畅销不衰。显然，对于我国学习英语的广大读者来说，亲切而不失幽默，同时又饱含人文气息的房龙作品原著是难得的阅读文本。因此，我们推出了房龙作品的英文原著，希望对读者有所裨益。

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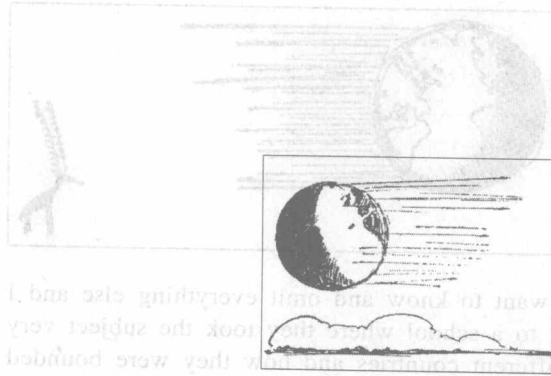
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... Yes, but how about

VAN LOON'S GEOGRAPHY

房龙地理



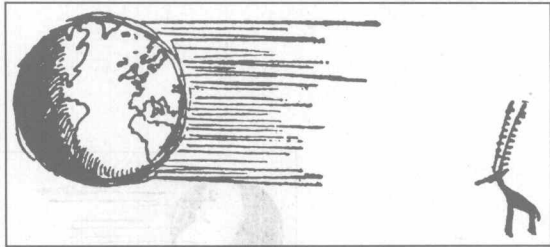
FOREWORD

Ten years ago you sent me a letter and today you get your answer. What you wrote (I am quoting from the original) was this:

“... Yes, but how about geography? No, I don't merely want a new geography. I want a geography of my own, a geography that shall tell me what I want to know and omit everything else and I want you to write it for me. I went to a school where they took the subject very seriously. I learned all about the different countries and how they were bounded and about the cities and how many inhabitants they had and I learned the names of all the mountains and how high they were and how much coal was exported every year, and I forgot all these things just as fast as I had learned them. They failed to connect. They resolved themselves into a jumble of badly digested recollections, like a museum too full of pictures or a concert that has lasted too long. And they were of no earthly value to me, for every time I needed some concrete fact, I had to look it up on maps and in atlases and encyclopedias and blue books. I suppose that many others have suffered in the same way. On behalf of all these poor victims, will you please give us a new geography that will be of some use? Put all the mountains and the cities and the oceans on your maps and then tell us only about the people who live in those places and why they are there and where they came from and what they are doing—a sort of human interest story applied to geography. And please stress the countries that are really interesting and don't pay quite so much attention to the others that are merely names, for then we will be able to remember all about them, but otherwise...”

And I, eager as always to oblige when I receive a command from your hands, turn around and say, “My dear, here it is!”

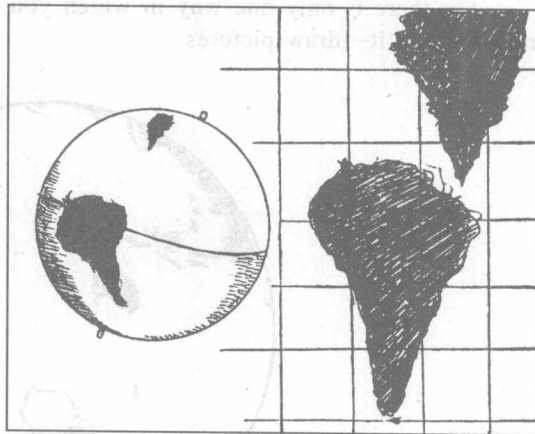
HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON



JUST A MOMENT BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER WHILE I TELL YOU HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book should be read with an atlas. There are a large number of excellent atlases and almost any one will do. For atlases are like dictionaries. Even a bad one is better than none at all.

As you will soon discover, there are quite a number of maps in this volume but these are not meant as a substitute for a regular atlas. I drew them merely to show you the many ways of approach to the subject under discussion and (if I must tell the truth) to get you personally interested in drawing maps according to your own notion of the geographical right and wrong. You see, flat maps, however ingeniously conceived, must be somewhat out of gear. The only



approximately correct maps are those pasted on globes but even our globes are not entirely above suspicion for they should really be spheroids. We make them spheres merely for the sake of convenience. The earth, of course, is slightly flattened near the poles but it would take a gigantic globe to show the difference, and so we need not worry about that minor irregularity. Get yourself a globe (I wrote this book with the help of a ten-cent-store globe which was really a pencil-sharpener) and use it to your heart's content, but remember that it is an "approximation" and not an "established fact". The "established facts" will only enter into your life if you should try to qualify for a master mariner's certificate. But in that case, you would have to spend many years mastering an exceedingly difficult branch of science; and this book was not written for specialists but for the average reader who wants to get some general ideas about the planet upon which he happens to live.

Now let me tell you one thing. The best and most convenient way to learn geography is to reevaluate everything into pictures.

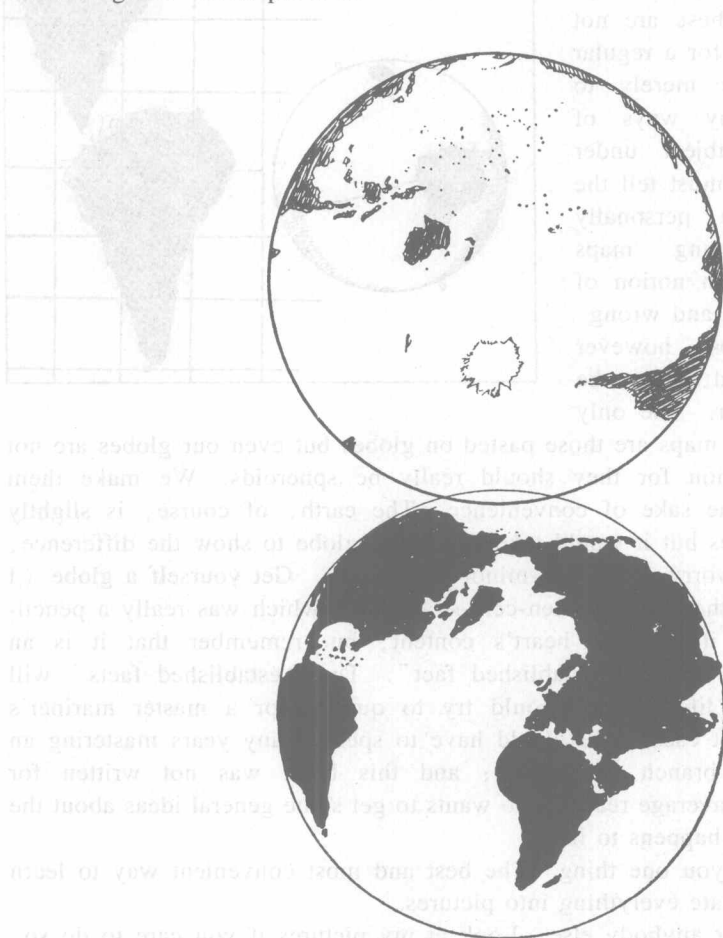
Don't copy me or anybody else. Look at my pictures if you care to do so, but regard them merely as a sort of geographical appetizer, as polite suggestions for the meal you intend to prepare yourself by and by.

I have tried to give you quite a number of samples according to the geographical notions of the author himself. I have drawn you two-dimensional maps and three-dimensional maps. It will take you some time to get accustomed to these three-dimensional contraptions but, once you see them, you will no longer

like the two-dimensional variety. I have given you maps as seen from mountain tops and according to the different angles from which you are able to contemplate a landscape. And I have given you maps as seen from aeroplanes and Zeppelins and the sort of maps we might expect to see if the oceans should run dry. I have given you a few maps which are merely pretty and ornamental and others which resemble geometrical patterns. Take your choice and then draw your own maps according to your own notions of how the thing should be done.

Draw maps... Get yourself a small globe or a large globe and an atlas. Buy yourself a pencil and a pad of paper and then draw your own pictures.

For there is only one way in which you can learn geography so that you will never forget it—draw pictures.



□ 历史是地理的第四维，它将时间和意义赋予地理