英汉对照

English on Sunday

星期天英语

第5辑

主编：王巧平 宁淑琴

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前言

本书是天津大学出版社特邀山西大学、山东大学、中山大学、北京外国语大学、天津师范大学、天津科技大学、天津外国语学院部分专家为具有初、中级英语水平的英语爱好者编写的实用型休闲读物。全套共7辑，每辑栏目基本一致，话题内容多为青年人感兴趣的短文，且英汉对照。英文力求原汁原味，尽量不进行任何删节，保持语言的地道；中译文力求信、达、雅，透彻、简洁、易懂是我们的目的。

各辑话题主要包括“科海探索”、“网络时代”、“影海撷章”、“夜访百家”、“健康氧吧”、“坐看天下”、“假日自助餐”、“幽默天地”、“假日论坛”、“人生百态”、“生态环境”、“爱情宝典”、“奥运大家谈”、“海外教育”、“涉足商海”等。

本书突出趣味、隽永、精要、新颖、难度适中、雅俗共赏的风格。读者既可以从中研习语言要点、琢磨互译妙处、扩大词汇量，也可以诵读华章亮段和点睛妙笔，在潜移默化中还可以陶冶情操、增长见闻、丰富知识、增添生活乐趣。衷心希望《星期天英语》能在广大的英语爱好者中遇见知音，成为您的好朋友、好帮手及休闲时的好伙伴。

本辑主编王巧平、宁淑琴。参加编写的还有邢振华、刘倩、程佳琦、黄敏之、王国华、陈锦然、刘振江。

由于编者经验不足，对一些文章的选取以及译文因作者水平有限，尚不能做到尽善尽美，文中纰漏之处，敬请斧正。

编　者

2003年10月

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Science & Research

科海探索

Science is built of facts the way a house is built of bricks; but an accumulation of facts is no more science than a pile of bricks is a house.

—*J. H. Poincare*

科学建立在事实上，正如房屋由砖砌成；但事实的积累并不是科学，正如一堆砖头并不是一所房子。

—J. H. 波恩卡雷

Stardust

This special issue of *The Sciences*, *The Frontiers of Life*, began its own life when David S. McKay and his co-workers announced that they had evidence for ancient life on Mars. The early details conveyed the credibility of the announcement: the suspects were microorganisms, not little green men, and the source was a team of respected investigators writing in the peer-reviewed journal *The Science*. One is exceedingly wary about claims for extraterrestrial life, of course; the history of the subject is replete with wishful thinking masquerading as tough-minded empirical science. But here at last, it seemed, was a claim that had the ring of truth: A meteorite, certifiably from Mars, carried the chemical signature of what could be the by-products of Martian metabolisms. Furthermore, as all the world could see, within that four-pound rock from Mars were microscopic rodlike objects that seemed to be the fossilized remains of extremely simple bacteria. No question: We at *The Sciences* owed you, our readers, an account of the matter that went substantially beyond the scope of a single article.

As we began to gather material, though, the life-on-Mars hypothesis was flagging under the rigors of continued scientific scrutiny. The evidence cited by McKay et al. was admittedly circumstantial from the start. But McKay had argued that, taken as a whole, his evidence pointed strongly toward a biological origin. Today, however, a consensus seems to be building that the reverse is true: the various clues add

up not to animal or vegetable, but mineral.

Was our story dead? On the contrary. According to the buzz at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held fully six months after the announcement, the Martian meteorite debate was having a galvanizing effect on a broad spectrum of scientific initiatives. At NASA, planned missions to Mars had acquired new urgency. Students of the earth's midocean ridge were closely following the incoming data from the Galileo mission to Jupiter, looking for more hints that an ocean of water- and with it, undersea volcanoes could exist under the ice that covers Jupiter's moon Europa. Future interplanetary missions to Europa and other promising sites seemed far more likely to find support than they had before McKay's announcement. In short, for the first time in many years there was widespread and genuine willingness to commit funds and reputations to exploring a range of issues related to the search for extraterrestrial life.

We, too, decided not to focus on Mars alone, and instead to expand our coverage to a much wider canvas. And once we did, we found a remarkable body of new evidence emerging from disparate disciplines that was pertinent to the questions raised by McKay. Biological interest in genetic self-repair led investigators to sequence the genome of the radiation-tolerant bacterium Demococcus Radiodurans. That work constitutes an important step in understanding an ingenious biological mechanism that might enable an organism to survive a long ride through space on a meteoroid. The serendipitous discovery of bacterial blooms following undersea volcanic eruptions led oceanographers to suggest that life might have originated on the seafloor, where it would have been protected from the lethal ultraviolet radiation and meteorites that bombarded the surface of the early earth. The U.S. Department of Energy, in

its effort to clean up toxic chemicals, drilled deep into the earth's crust to prove that bacteria could live there and, perhaps, be trained to digest chemical contaminants. Weapons testing with high-speed projectiles helped prove that material exchange between the planets is not so limited as had once been thought: in fact, some 500 kilograms of rock from Mars are estimated to land on the earth each year. Finally, as Laurence A. Marschall reports in *Planetary Prospecting*, a clever program to hunt for periodic changes in the spectra of stars has confirmed the existence of numerous giant planets orbiting stars beyond our solar system.

And so, to the question: Is there life beyond the earth? The jury, of course, is still out. But with planets aplenty; with creatures that can live without the energy of a nearby star; with abundant cosmic sources of hydrogen and oxygen to make water; with several natural ways for planets to generate internal heat; with the possibility that life could originate in undersea volcanoes and propagate varieties hardy enough to spread their seeds to other worlds; and with rocky meteorites that could serve as vehicles for interplanetary exchange, the idea that life has evolved elsewhere in the universe seems less daunting than it did just a few years ago. The singer and songwriter Joni Mitchell had it right, when she wrote years ago:

We are stardust
(Billion-year-old carbon)
We are golden...
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden.
(Peter G. Brown)

译文

星 尘

《科学》杂志的专刊《生命前沿》开始发行时，戴维·马凯和他的同事宣布已经掌握了火星上有古代生命的证据。从以前公布的情况来看，此说有其可信性：他们只是怀疑火星上有微生物，而不是有什么小绿人，况且消息来自一组受人尊敬的研究人员发表在同行阅读的《科学》杂志上面。当然，现在人们总是对地外生命的说法持特别警惕的态度；过去一提到地外生命，人们就充满痴心与妄想，这个提法总是以讲究实际的实验科学的面目出现。现在终于有了听起来相当真实的说法：现已证实来自火星的一块陨石携带着一种化学物质，它们可能反映出火星上生命新陈代谢的某些特征。世所共知，在那四磅重的陨石内部有微小的杆状物质，可能是极原始的细菌化石。毫无疑问，我们《科学》杂志应用远比这篇文章更多的篇幅对这件事做出分析和解释。

但是当我们开始收集资料时，火星上有生命这一假设正在经受科学界不断的严格审查。马凯等人引用的证据从一开始就被公认为很难断定。但是马凯说从整体情况来看，他的证据明显表示陨石上的物质属于生物。然而今天舆论趋于一致，认为相反的意见是正确的：各种线索加起来说明此物质既不属于动物，也不属于植物，而是属于矿物。

难道我们的故事就此结束了吗?正相反。在马凯的判断公布整整六个月之后，美国科学发展协会年会上传来的信息说有关火星陨石的争论引起了一系列科学议题的提出。对美国国家宇航局来说，火星登陆计划更显得特别紧迫。研究地球大洋洋底的海脊的学者也在密切注视探索木星的伽利略号飞船传回的最新信息：寻求在木星的卫星欧罗巴表面冰盖下面可能存

在着海洋及海底火山的迹象。将来飞往欧罗巴及其他可能有生命的地点的星际航行任务可能会比马凯的发现宣布之前寻求到更多的资金支持。总之，多年来，第一次有更多的人真诚地愿意对探索地外生命诸问题提供更多的资金，给予更多的重视。

我们还决定不要只关注火星的生命现象，而要在更大的范围内进行研究探索。这样一来，我们便发现了数量惊人的新证据，他们分别来自与马凯假设有关的不同学科领域。生物界对基因自我修补的兴趣使探索者对耐放射线的细菌（Demococcus Radiodurans）的基因组的排列顺序进行了研究，这有助于理解小行星上有机物精妙的生理机制，这种机制能使它们在宇宙中长途跋涉后仍能生存下来。海底火山喷发后会有大量细菌滋生，因此，海洋学家提出生命可能发源于海洋底部，那里可以保护生命免遭致命紫外线的辐射和小行星撞击早期地球表面带来的致命危险。美国能源部为了清除有毒的化学物质，曾钻探到地壳深处，试图证明细胞有能力在那里生存，也许还吞噬掉化学污染物。武器实验中发射的高速射弹也有助于证明行星间的物质交换并不像以前认为的那样有限：事实上，每年约有500公斤火星岩石溅落到地球上。最后，正如劳伦斯·马歇尔在《行星勘探》一书中所说，一个搜寻恒星光谱周期变化的聪明计划已经证实在太阳系之外有无数个大行星围绕着恒星在做轨道运行。

所以，地球之外有生命存在吗?对这个问题目前还难以确定。然而空间行星多不可数；有些生物可以在没有附近恒星提供能量的情况下生存；太空中有大量氧和氢，这些太空资源可以合成水；相当数量的行星内部存在着天然的热能；海底火山附近可能有生命存在，它们种类多，大量繁殖而且很难发展到其他地方繁殖和生长；陨石可能就是行星际物质交换的一个载体。考虑到以上因素，生命由宇宙中其他地方进化而来的想法就不会像几年前那么令人咋舌了。歌手及词作者约尼·米切尔几年前写的歌词中说得好：

我们是宇宙中的尘埃，
我们是有几十亿年龄的碳。
我们朝气蓬勃，金光灿灿……
我们要设法回到那乐园。