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Many strange new creatures are discovered in China

中国发现许多奇特的新生物



This week Xingliang Zhang of Northwest University in China reports in Science the discovery of a new site full of animals that have never been seen before.

中国西北大学的张兴亮本周在《科学》期刊上宣布，他们发现了一个全新的遗址，那里到处都埋藏着前所未见的（软躯体）动物（化石）。

For soft-bodied animals to be preserved, something catastrophic must take place. In the case of the world's two most famous Cambrian sites, the Burgess Shale accumulation in Canada and the Chengjiang site in China, this catastrophe was a series of storms that dumped vast quantities of mud upon a community of animals, burying them alive.

软躯体生物要被保存下来，就必定要经历灾难性的事件。全世界最著名的两个寒武纪遗址（加拿大的伯吉斯页岩化石群和中国的澄江化石地）就是灾难的产物，这类灾难是一连串的风暴，这些风暴将大量泥浆倾倒在动物群上并将其活埋。

The new site that Dr Zhang is reporting, known as Qingjiang, is similar to the others in that the animals seem to have been killed by a sudden mud burial. However, that is where the similarities end.

张兴亮博士所报告的新遗址被称作“清江生物群”，这个遗址和其他遗址的相似之处在于，这里的动物似乎是被突如其来的泥浆活埋致死。但是，相似的地方仅此而已。

Qingjiang has yielded over 20,000 specimens thus far. Of these, 4,351 have been properly analysed and are thought to represent around 100 groups of creatures. Dr Zhang and his colleagues estimate that 54 of these groups have never been seen before.

迄今为止，清江生物群已经出土了两万多样品。其中，（研究人员）已经完整分析了 4351 件标本，并认为它们代表了大约 100 个属种。据张博士和他的同事估计，其中有 54 个属种之前从未被发现。

There are some familiar animals like cnidarians, but these also raise extensive questions. Cnidarians exist widely in modern oceans and have simplistic bodies that suggest they evolved early during the rise of animal life. Given this, it was expected that when the Burgess Shale and Chengjiang sites were first excavated that cnidarians would be common in the sedimentary layers, but precisely the opposite proved true.

（化石标本中）有一些常见的动物，比如刺细胞动物，但是这也引起了许多疑问。刺细胞动物在现代海洋中普遍存在，它们的身体结构十分简单，这也表明它们的进化时间在动物生命兴起的早期。鉴于此，在伯吉斯页岩化石群和澄江化石地一开始被发掘时，研究人员预测，在沉积层中到处都会存在刺细胞动物，但是事实恰恰相反。

Qingjiang surprised Dr Zhang by being loaded with spectacularly well-preserved members of this soft-bodied group. Containing everything from delicate comb jellies to the medusae that roam the seas and sting fish with their venomous tentacles, Qingjiang reveals that these animals were well established at the time and actually thriving in some environments. Precisely what these environmental differences were though, remains the subject of intensive inquiry.

让张兴亮博士意想不到的，清江生物群有大量保存极其良好的这类软躯体生物。清江生物群中包括许多动物，从小巧精致的栉水母到在海中漫游并且用毒触手蜇鱼的水母应有尽有。清江生物群揭示，这些动物在当时已经很成熟，甚至在一些生态环境中繁衍壮大。然而，这些环境差异具体是什么，仍然有待深入研究。

----- The Economist Newspaper

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重点词汇

catastrophic /ˌkætəˈstrɑːfɪk/

adj. 灾难性的；引起重大灾难的

- 相关词汇：catastrophe (n. 灾难)
- 搭配短语：a catastrophic earthquake
- 搭配短语：the company's catastrophic losses

Cambrian /ˈkæmbriən/

adj. 寒武纪的，与寒武纪相关的

- 相关词汇：Cambria
- 搭配短语：the Cambrian Explosion

shale /ʃeɪl/

n. 页岩

dump /dʌmp/

v. 倾倒；丢弃

- 搭配短语：dump A upon B
- 例句：Some factories dump toxic chemicals into the sea.
- 例句：They dumped tons of salt on icy road surfaces.

specimen /ˈspesɪmən/

n. 标本；样本

- 英文释义：Specimen means an individual animal, plant, etc. used as an example of its species or type for scientific study or display.
- 词义辨析：species, specimen
species 指的是动植物的物种，而 specimen 指的是某个物种的一个样本，用来做科研或展览。

properly /ˈprɒːpərli/

adv. (英式英语) 完全地；充分地

- 例句：My computer is not working properly. (adv. 正确地，令人满意地)
- 英文释义：completely or fully
- 例句：The case wasn't properly investigated.

cnidarian/n(a)ɪ'dɛəriən/

n. 刺细胞动物

excavate/'ekskəveɪt/

v. 挖掘，挖出

- 词根词缀：ex-（使某物出来）
- 词性拓展：excavation（n.）

sedimentary/ˌsedɪ'mentri/

adj. 沉积的

- 相关词汇：sediment（n. 沉积物，沉淀物）
- 搭配短语：sedimentary layer

be loaded with

含有大量的...，富含

- 英文释义：to contain a lot of something
- 例句：Most fast foods are loaded with fat.

comb jelly/koʊm 'dʒeli/

n. 栉水母

medusa/mi'dju:zə/

n. 水母

- 相关词汇：medusae（medusa 复数形式）

roam/roʊm/

v. 闲逛，漫游

- 英文释义：to walk or travel around an area without any definite aim or direction
- 近义词：wander
- 例句：Barefoot children roamed the streets.

venomous/'venəməs/

adj. 分泌毒液的；有毒的

- 相关词汇：venom（n.）
- 词根词缀：-ous（有...性质的）
- 搭配短语：a highly venomous snake

tentacle/'tentəkl/

n. (海洋动物的) 触手, 触角

- 相关词汇: feeler