

Waking Up with a Demon on Your Chest 鬼压床?别胡思乱想了!

You awake suddenly and try to turn your head, but your body is frozen. Then you understand: a creature from hell is coming for you, again. You can feel its presence pushing down on your chest. Is this death coming? 当你突然醒来并试着转动你的头时，身体却是僵住了。然后你发现一个来自地狱的怪物再度朝你走来，感觉它压在你的胸口上，这是死亡降临吗？

The above experience is actually quite common. Scientists say that between 25 and 40 percent of people have **gone through** it, or experienced something similar. Cultures around the world even have their own special names for it: in Japan, it's called *kanashibari* (bound or fastened in mental); in China, it's known as "being **crushed** by a ghost," and in Western countries, people often think they are **victims** of an **alien abduction**.

上述经验事实上是满常见的。科学表示 25%~40% 的人曾经经历过这样或是类似的情形。对此现象，世界各地的文化有其特别的说法:在日本，这称作「金缚」(被金属束缚住); 在中国则称为「鬼压床」; 而在西方国家，人们认为他们被外星人绑架了。

Although it seems very real to the person experiencing it, *kanashibari* or alien abduction is only imagined. It is in fact part of a disorder called [sleep paralysis](#). Sleep paralysis lasts for a few minutes when a person is entering or leaving sleep and is in the **phase** called [REM](#) (rapid eye movement). During REM sleep the muscles relax and, in order to prevent the body from moving and **acting out** its dreams, the brain **blocks** signals that would allow the **limbs** to move.

虽然这对经历过的人来说似乎十分逼真，「金缚」或「被外星人绑架」其实只是想象出来的。它事实上是一种称为睡眠瘫痪症的生理失调。睡眠瘫痪症可维持数分钟之久，发生在即将入睡或即将醒来的时候，称之为「快速动眼」期。在快速动眼睡眠期间，肌肉会放松，为了避免肢体移动将梦境表现出来，大脑会阻挡让四肢移动的讯号。

Doctors have been slow to recognize sleep paralysis as a **legitimate** medical problem, but many studies are now underway. Researchers don't have all the answers yet, but a fuller picture of the mental and physical effects of sleep paralysis is starting to **emerge**.

医界很晚才认清睡眠瘫痪症是一种医学上的问题，但有许多研究正在进行中。虽然研究人员尚未得到所有答案，但是对于睡眠瘫痪在心理上及生理上所造成的影响，已开始浮现一个较完整的概念。

—by Murray Walker

Vocabulary

crush [krʌʃ] v. 压垮

victim [ˈvɪktɪm] n. 受害者

block [blɒk] v. 阻挡

emerge [ɪˈmɜːdʒ] v. 浮现; 出现

More Information

go through: 经历 to experience or endure something

alien [ˈeɪlɪən] n. 外星人

abduction [æbˈdʌkʃən] n. 绑架; 劫持

paralysis [pəˈræləsɪs] n. 麻痹, 瘫痪

phase [feɪz] n. 阶段, 时期

act out: 把...表演出来

limb [lɪm] n. 四肢

legitimate [lɪˈdʒɪtɪməɪt] adj. 正统的; 正当的, 合理的

Reading Questions

1. What is the article trying to tell us?
 - A. Kanachibari is an uncommon experience and makes one feel **relieved** and relaxed.
 - B. Victims of alien abduction are common in Western countries.
 - C. If you feel frozen upon awakening, you may be suffering sleep paralysis.
 - D. Researchers are studying why there are many special names for sleep paralysis.
2. What happens to a person during REM sleep?
 - A. He acts out his dream at all times.
 - B. The brain transmits signals that force the feet and hands to move.
 - C. He is completely paralyzed
 - D. The eyes move quickly but the body relaxes.
3. Which of the following statements is CORRECT about sleep paralysis?
 - A. It usually lasts no more than a few minutes, and many people have experienced it.
 - B. Cultures all over the world explain the condition in the same way.
 - C. Since it is by no means a legitimate medical problem, few studies are being conducted.
 - D. It takes place neither in the first few minutes of sleep nor when one is about to leave sleep.

Sleep paralysis occurs during the REM phase of sleep when limb movement has been shut down by the brain. It's no surprise, then, why people feel panicked. They are awake (or semi-awake) but can't move. Exactly why they imagine **demons** or aliens are after them is not completely understood. In part, it may be because during REM sleep the centers of the brain associated with emotions are very active. Sleep paralysis **triggers** a feeling of terror and this stimulates the brain to produce bad memories and imagines. Because the brain is still asleep, these memories and images come out in nightmare-like forms.

睡眠瘫痪发生在四肢运动被大脑关闭的快速动眼睡眠期。此时人们之所以会感到惊慌就不令人意外了，因为他们醒过来(或半醒)时，却动也不能动。但到底人们为什么会想象成恶魔或外星人在缠着他们仍不得其解。有一部份可能是因为与情绪相关的大脑中心在快速动眼睡眠期仍非常活跃。睡眠瘫痪会引发害怕的感觉，进而刺激大脑产生不好的记忆及影像。因为大脑仍处于睡眠状态，于是这些记忆及影像就会以恶梦的形式呈现出来。

A first experience with sleep paralyse usually happened around the age of 16 or 17. **Episodes** increase in frequency through the late teenage years before declining suddenly in the twenties. Sleep **deprivation** is one of the major causes of the disorder. Many people who experience sleep paralyse choose not to tell others about their experiences for fear of being **labeled** mentally **unstable**. Unfortunately, this leaves victims **isolated** and fearful, which increases their chances of having another episode.

第一次的睡眠瘫痪经验通常发生在十六、七岁左右。而其发生的频率在青春期晚期会增加，然后在二十多岁时突然下降。失眠也是造成这种失调现象的主要原因之一。许多经历睡眠瘫痪的人因怕被贴上精神状况不稳定的标签，都选择不把经历告诉别人。不幸的是，这让很多受害者感到孤立及害怕，也增加了睡眠瘫痪再度发生的机会。

For those who suffer from severe paralysis, [Prozac](#)-type [anti-depressants](#) have proven quite successful as a **treatment**. However, understanding what sleep paralyse really is, is probably the best defense against it. With knowledge and **awareness**, people can develop techniques for waking properly that will free them from the feeling that a demon is **lurking** in their room.

对于那些深受睡眠瘫痪症之苦的人来说，百忧解之类的抗抑郁剂已被证实为相当有效的疗法。然而，了解睡眠瘫痪症的真相也许才是最佳防患之道。人们有了这样的知识和认知，才可以研究让人在适当时间醒来而不会觉得有恶魔潜伏在房间里的技巧。

Vocabulary

trigger [ˈtrɪgə] v. 触发，引起

label [ˈleɪl] v. 用标签标明；标明

isolated [ˈaɪsəleɪtɪd] adj. 隔离的

treatment [ˈtri:tmənt] n. 治疗法

More Information

demon [ˈdɪməŋ] n. 恶魔，恶鬼

episode [ˈɛpəˌsɒd] n. 一段经历；一段时期

deprivation [ˌdɛprɪˈveɪʃən] n. 剥夺

unstable [ʌnˈstɛbəl] adj. 不稳固的

anti-depressant [ˌæntɪˈdɛprɪsənt] n. 抗抑郁剂

awareness [əˈwɛrnɪs] n. 察觉；觉悟；体认

lurk [lɜ:k] v. 潜伏，埋伏

Answer

1. (C)

2. (D)

3. (A)