

Meteorite Fragments Provide View into the Earliest History of the Solar System



NOVEMBER 1, 2012 |

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The minivan-sized meteorite that broke up over the Sierra on Sunday, April 22, 2012 was not just any old space rock. It was one of the rarest types of meteorites to fall to Earth — a carbonaceous chondrite, the earliest solid material to form in our Solar System more than four and a half billion years ago, before the planets, including the Earth, formed. This meteorite could turn out to be one of the most important observed fall since the late 1960s, says UC Davis geology professor Qing-Zhu Yin. These primitive meteorites provide a glimpse into the first few millions of years of the Solar System's history.

Qing-Zhu Yin

Professor Qing-Zhu Yin of the UC Davis Department of Geology uses extinct radioactivity and general isotopic anomalies in the early solar system recorded in primitive meteorites as a tool to study the time scales and site of nucleosynthesis, the time of formation of the solar system and planetary differentiation. Professor Qing-Zhu Yin's research focuses primarily on reconstructing the history of chemical and physical processes involved in the formation of the Sun and the planets.



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