

LESSON

15

The Immortal Jellyfish



▲benikurage

immortal [im'ɔ:rtl]
jellyfish [dʒɛlɪfɪʃ]
multicellular
 [mʌltisɛljələʃ]
organism(s)
 [ɔ:gənɪz(ə)m(z)]
shark [ʃɑ:k]
eagle [i:gl]

accidentally
 [æksədəntəli]
northern [nɔ:θərn]

rejuvenate(s)
 [rɪdʒu:vəneɪt(s)]
sink [sɪŋk]
seabed [si:bɛd]

mass [mæs]
attach(es) [ətætʃ(ɪz)]

float(s) [fləʊt(s)]

immortality
 [ɪmɔ:rtələti]

DNA [di:enəi]

1 There are 1.4 million multicellular organisms on the earth. Which one is the most amazing—a human, a shark, an eagle, or something else? Actually, it may be a small jellyfish called *benikurage*, which is only one centimeter across at most. It lives not only all around the coast of Japan but also in many other parts of the world.

2 *Benikurage* is famous because it is the first immortal multicellular organism ever reported. The fact that it is immortal was announced to the world in 1991. It was discovered accidentally by some college researchers in northern Italy.

3 *Benikurage* repeatedly rejuvenates itself. As jellyfish get old, they sink to the seabed. At this stage, most jellyfish die and disappear, but not *benikurage*. It turns into a round mass, which attaches itself to a rock and begins to grow. Eventually, it grows into a young jellyfish and floats away. In this way, *benikurage* can have a new life over and over again.

4 Scientists have been studying *benikurage*'s immortality for more than 20 years. If they can understand the secret of its DNA, it may one day help humans to live longer.

Read It Through

A Match each word from the text with its explanation.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. immortal () | a. by chance |
| 2. multicellular () | b. living forever |
| 3. accidentally () | c. made of many cells |
| 4. sink () | d. to go down in water |

B Answer the following questions.

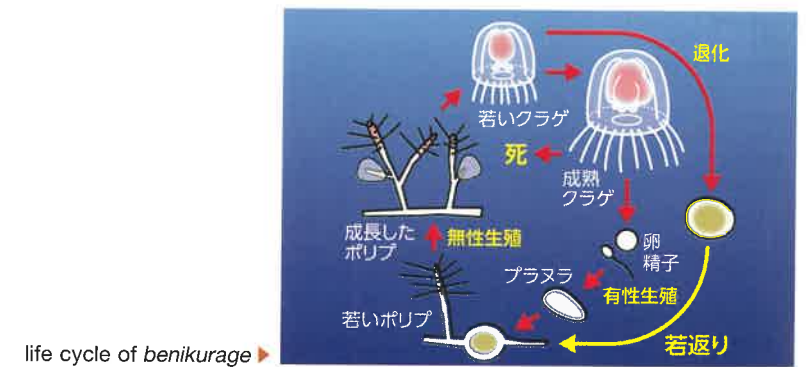
- Where does *benikurage* live?
- Why is *benikurage* the most amazing of all multicellular organisms?
- How was the fact of *benikurage*'s immortality discovered?
- What may be possible for human beings if we can find out *benikurage*'s secret?

C Fill in the blanks.

What happens when each kind of jellyfish gets old?

- An ordinary jellyfish _____.
- A *benikurage* _____
 - becomes _____.
 - then attaches _____.
 - finally _____ and floats away.

It repeats the stages from ① to ③.



life cycle of benikurage ▶

It's Your Turn!

- What do you think about *benikurage*'s immortality? Choose one or more statements.
 - I didn't know about *benikurage*'s immortality before I read this story.
 - I would like to become younger like *benikurage*.
 - Studying *benikurage* may enable people to live forever.

2. Write your opinion.

I think _____ } it is good for people to achieve immortality because _____
 I don't think _____ }