

# A Novel Approach for the Oxidative Degradation of Organic Pollutants in Aqueous Solutions Mediated by Iron Tetrasulfophthalocyanine under Visible Light Radiation

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**Abstract:** An efficient approach has been developed to decompose toxic organic pollutants. The photodegradation of Rhodamine B (RhB), salicylic acid, and Orange II was examined in the presence of iron tetrasulfophthalocyanine ([Fe(PcS)]) and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> under visible irradiation. It was found that under visible light irradiation, organic pollutants in the [Fe(PcS)]/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system can

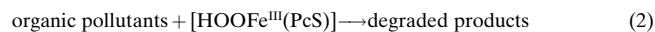
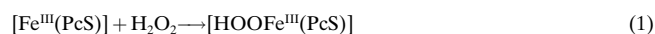
be rapidly degraded, but the concentration of [Fe(PcS)] remains nearly unchanged, and this indicates that [Fe(PcS)] has a good catalytic character. EPR results and other experimental

results suggest that the light-activated reaction process involves the formation and reaction of HO• radicals. On the basis of the experimental results, a possible reaction mechanism for the degradation of organic pollutants under visible light illumination in the aqueous [Fe(PcS)]/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> solutions is proposed.

**Keywords:** iron • photodegradation • photooxidation • phthalocyanines • pollutants

## Introduction

Recently a renewed interest has been shown in the oxidative degradation of organic pollutants catalyzed by iron(III) tetrasulfophthalocyanine ([Fe(PcS)]), a biomimetic complex, in a reaction in the dark.<sup>[1]</sup> The reaction process involves a nucleophilic iron(III) peroxo complex, [HOOFe<sup>III</sup>(PcS)], as an active species responsible for the degradation and mineralization of organic pollutants (such as trichlorophenol) (see Equations (1) and (2)).



Since [Fe(PcS)] is a readily available biomimetic compound, which can be supported on ion-exchange resins rather than entering the environment to cause additional pollution, [Fe(PcS)] is an attractive alternative in the treatment of organic pollutants compared with the ferrous or ferric salts employed in the (photo-)Fenton system.<sup>[2]</sup> However, although the [Fe(PcS)]/H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> system can efficiently degrade organic pollutants, the mixed solvent of acetonitrile/H<sub>2</sub>O must be employed in this catalytic system. If water is used as the sole

solvent, the conversion rate of pollutants in this system will be greatly reduced, which places some limitations on the treatment of organic pollutants in an aqueous system.<sup>[3]</sup> Therefore, more studies are needed to search for novel methods for the treatment of persistent organic pollutants in aqueous solutions by utilizing the biomimetic system.

We recently found that under visible light irradiation ( $\lambda > 470 \text{ nm}$ ) iron(III) tetrasulfophthalocyanine enabled organic pollutants to be degraded effectively in an aqueous system by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> oxidation. Preliminary results reported in a recent communication<sup>[4]</sup> show that in the presence of [Fe(PcS)] and H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> visible light irradiation markedly accelerated the degradation of organic pollutants compared with the reaction in the dark, and that the photoassisted degradation process by visible radiation involves the formation and reaction of HO• radicals with a high oxidative activity, which is significantly different from that in the reaction in the dark involving an iron(III) peroxo complex as mentioned above [Eqs. (1) and (2)].

In recent years, the textile and photographic industries have produced dye pollutants that are emerging as a major source of environmental contamination.<sup>[5]</sup> In China, above  $1.6 \times 10^9 \text{ m}^3 \text{ year}^{-1}$  dye-polluted wastewater drains into environmental water systems without treatment. Our group and others have reported that nonbiodegradable dye pollutants can be photodecomposed under visible irradiation in aqueous TiO<sub>2</sub> suspensions<sup>[6]</sup> and/or in the visible light-assisted (photo-)Fenton reaction.<sup>[7]</sup> Notwithstanding, developing new types of catalytic systems to degrade dye pollutants under visible light irradiation remains an important issue.

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In this paper, the photooxidation of two kinds of non-biodegradable dyes with different structures, Rhodamine B (RhB) and Orange II, as the target pollutants was carried out under visible light irradiation in the aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solution. For comparison, the photodegradation of a small molecular compound, salicylic acid, was also examined in this system.

During the photoreaction, the formation of hydroxyl radicals was detected by EPR spectroscopy as well as by the photodegradation rate variations of RhB or Orange II upon addition of ethanol to the reaction system. The degradation rate of RhB and the depletion of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  as a function of irradiation time were determined in the presence and absence of fluoride ions to elucidate the effect of ligands on the photodegradation. The photodegradation of RhB and Orange II were also carried out under irradiation by monochromatic light to reveal some details of the photoreaction pathway. A possible photochemical reaction mechanism of the pollutant degradation, particularly for the primary reaction mechanism, is proposed on the basis of experimental results.

This study may provide a novel approach for the oxidative degradation of organic pollutants in aqueous solutions with the biomimetic compound  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  under visible light irradiation.

## Results and Discussion

**Degradation of RhB:** The temporal absorption spectra changes taking place in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under visible light illumination are displayed in Figure 1. The

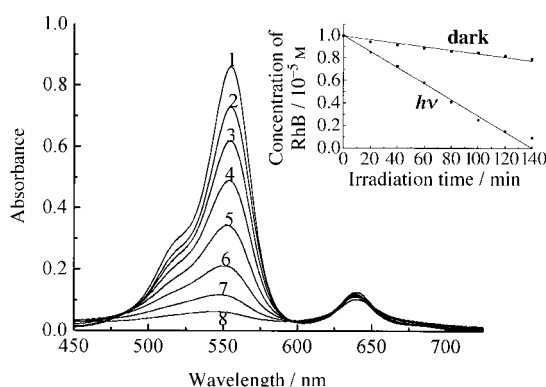


Figure 1. UV/Vis spectral changes of RhB as a function of irradiation time in aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  solutions under visible light irradiation. The initial concentrations of the reaction system: RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ),  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1.7 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ), and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ ). pH 3. Spectra 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 denote irradiation for 0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100, 120, and 140 min, respectively. Inset shows concentration changes of RhB both in the dark and under visible irradiation.

maximum absorption wavelengths corresponding to RhB and  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  are at approximately 555 and 639 nm, respectively. RhB as well as  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  can be simultaneously excited by visible light irradiation ( $\lambda > 470 \text{ nm}$ ). As can be seen from Figure 1, under irradiation, the characteristic absorption band

of RhB at approximately 555 nm decreased in size rapidly and disappeared after irradiation of 140 min, whereas the 639 nm band was almost unchanged with increasing irradiation time; concomitantly, the color of the reaction solution changed from the initial pink-red to light blue (the color of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ ). This indicates that the chromophoric structure of the RhB is destroyed. The pH value of the solution decreased slightly (from the initial pH 3.0 to 2.9) after the photoreaction. During the photodegradation, no significant changes of the  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  UV/Vis spectra were observed, and no free  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  or  $\text{Fe}^{3+}$  ions were detected; this indicated that  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  can be regarded as an efficient photocatalyst to degrade the persistent dye pollutants. Furthermore, it was found that after the degradation of the dye RhB, the bleaching of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  was rather slow ( $\Delta C/\Delta t = 1.8 \times 10^{-8} \text{ mol L}^{-1} \text{ min}^{-1}$ ); this indicated that during the photodegradation  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  was relatively stable. As reported in the recent communication,<sup>[4]</sup> an apparent reduction of TOC (total organic carbon) was obtained in the aqueous RhB/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible light irradiation (ca. 30% TOC removal of RhB after irradiation of 8 h).

The inset in Figure 1 shows the temporal concentration changes of RhB under visible light illumination and in the dark. Under both sets of conditions, zero-order kinetics, at least for the first 100 min of reaction, were obtained ( $k_{\text{hv}} = 7.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ mol L}^{-1} \text{ min}^{-1}$ ,  $k_{\text{dark}} = 1.1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ mol L}^{-1} \text{ min}^{-1}$ ). Evidently, visible light irradiation accelerates markedly the degradation of RhB in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  compared with the reaction in the dark. Control experiments showed that under visible irradiation RhB did not degrade in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ , and degraded to a small extent in the presence of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ , under otherwise identical experimental conditions.

Figure 2 shows the concentration changes of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  during the whole degradation process under visible irradiation. Within the initial 100 min of photoreaction, the rapid degradation of RhB occurred concomitantly with the decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ . After the initial RhB had degraded to a large extent, a definite amount of RhB (ca. the same concentration as the initial solution) was added again into

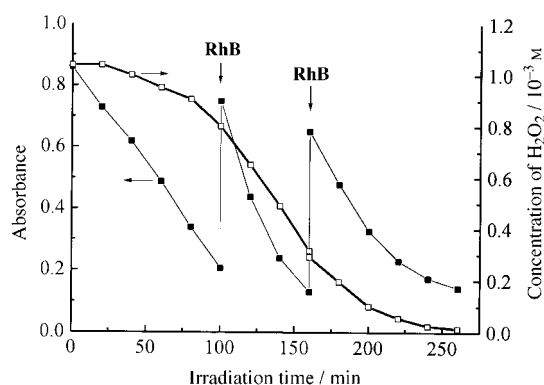


Figure 2. Variations in absorption spectra of RhB (initial concentration  $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) and concentration changes of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  (initial concentration  $1.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ ) with irradiation time in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1.4 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ). At 100 min and 160 min each, RhB ( $2.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ , 100  $\mu\text{L}$ ) was added to the reaction system (total volume: 50 mL). pH 3.

the system undergoing degradation. It was found that the second amount of RhB added also degraded at a fast rate concomitantly with further decomposition of the residual  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ . Similarly, upon the third addition of RhB to the reaction system, RhB was still degraded, although the degradation rate of RhB decreased owing to the decrease in the concentration of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  in the system. The observed  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  depletion rate seems to be related to the degradation rate of RhB, although a direct quantitative relationship between them was not obtained owing to the complicated reaction mechanisms (see below for discussion of the mechanisms). Of importance is that during the whole process above no apparent degradation of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  was observed. Control experiments on the  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  determination were also carried out under otherwise identical conditions but in the dark. It was found that in the dark the decomposition of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  was negligible, which is consistent with the result of the very slow degradation of RhB in the dark (see inset in Figure 1), but this is completely different from that in the photoreaction.

**Formation of radicals:** To gain insight into the nature of short-lived radicals formed during the photodegradation under visible irradiation, the EPR technique was employed to provide useful information on the reaction mechanism. A visible light source (500 W halogen lamp,  $\lambda > 470 \text{ nm}$ ) was employed as the irradiation light for detecting EPR signals of the RhB/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ / $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system. The characteristic four peaks of DMPO– $\cdot\text{OH}$  (DMPO = 5,5-dimethyl-1-pyrroline-*N*-oxide) adducts with an intensity of 1:2:2:1 are consistent with similar spectra reported by others for  $\text{HO}\cdot$  adducts,<sup>[8]</sup> and this indicates that  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals are generated and participate in the photodegradation of RhB. Figure 3 shows that the

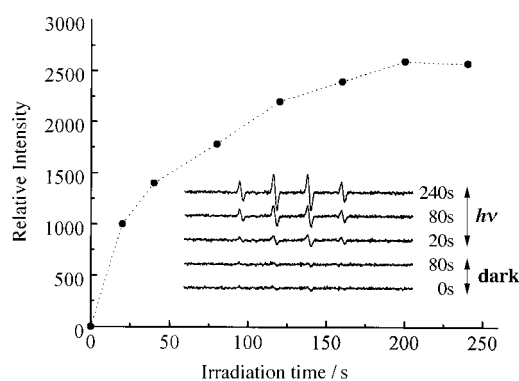


Figure 3. Relevant intensity of DMPO– $\cdot\text{OH}$  adducts in the RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ )/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ )/ $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $2.5 \times 10^{-2} \text{ M}$ ) system measured as a function of visible illumination time. DMPO, 0.15 M; pH 3. The inset shows EPR signals of the DMPO– $\cdot\text{OH}$  adducts both in the dark and under visible illumination.

intensity of the four peaks of DMPO– $\cdot\text{OH}$  was significantly enhanced with increasing irradiation time from 0 to 240 s. The inset in Figure 3 shows the signal changes of DMPO– $\cdot\text{OH}$  in the dark and in the photoreaction, respectively. The EPR results indicated that in the dark (even if the reaction in the dark proceeds for 10 min) no signals with a significant intensity were observed, which is in good agreement with

the results reported by Meunier et al.<sup>[9]</sup> that the reaction in the dark does not involve the formation and reaction of  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals, whereas in the photoreaction, visible light irradiation can greatly enhance the generation of  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals and hence accelerate the degradation of RhB.

In order to further verify whether  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals are involved in the course of photocatalytic degradation of RhB or Orange II, we carried out the experiment in the presence of ethanol, an effective  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radical scavenger, to inhibit the degradation reaction mediated by hydroxyl radicals. The result showed that addition of 50 or 100 equivalents of ethanol with respect to the RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) markedly retarded the oxidative degradation of RhB ( $k'_{\text{hr}} = 6.0 \times 10^{-7} \text{ mol L}^{-1} \text{ min}^{-1}$ ) in the solutions containing  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1.4 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ ). A similar result was also obtained upon addition of ethanol to the Orange II/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ / $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system. All these results strongly suggest that  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals are indeed involved in the visible light assisted photodegradation reaction of RhB or Orange II, which is also consistent with the EPR spectra under visible light irradiation (see Figure 3).

**Degradation of small organic molecule:** In order to further examine the role of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  in the photoreaction, the degradation of salicylic acid (SA, a small organic molecule, no absorption in the visible region) was investigated by a HPLC analyzer. As the degradation proceeded, the peak intensity of SA decreased, and approximately 70 % of SA was degraded after 520 min of irradiation in the aqueous solutions containing  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ . From the HPLC spectra, we cannot determine the change of the amount of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  because  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  and the solvent have the same retention time. Therefore, the concentration variations of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  during the photodegradation of SA were also determined by the DPD (*N,N*-dimethyl-*p*-phenylenediamine) method.<sup>[10]</sup> The plot of concentration variations of SA,  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ , and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  versus irradiation time is shown in Figure 4. It was found that the concentration of

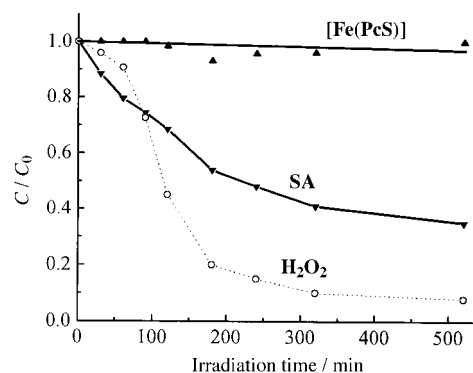


Figure 4. The plot of concentrations of SA,  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ , and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  versus irradiation time during the photodegradation of salicylic acid (SA,  $1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$ ) in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1.7 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ ) at pH 3.

$\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  decreased concomitantly with the degradation of SA. Of particular relevance are the signals of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ , the intensity of which remains nearly unchanged during the course of the photooxidation, and this indicates that  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  as an

efficient photocatalyst can also degrade the small organic molecules in the presence of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under visible illumination. Control experiments show that, under otherwise identical conditions, no degradation of SA was observed in the presence of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  alone or  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  alone. Also, SA could not be degraded in the dark in the presence of both  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .

The EPR experimental results also showed that the hydroxyl radicals were indeed generated by irradiating the reaction system of  $\text{SA}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  with the visible light source (500 W halogen lamp,  $\lambda > 470 \text{ nm}$ ) as described above. Furthermore, the signal intensity of the  $\text{DMPO}\cdot\text{OH}$  adducts was enhanced gradually with increasing illumination time, which is paralleled with the ESR results for the  $\text{RhB}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system (see Figure 3). Control experiments show that in the dark no significant signals of  $\text{DMPO}\cdot\text{OH}$  adducts were observed at the same initial concentrations of  $\text{SA}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  as employed in the photoreaction. These results suggest that in the  $\text{SA}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system, visible light irradiation can also generate  $\text{HO}\cdot$  radicals and hence accelerate greatly the degradation of SA.

**Effect of axial ligands:** It is well known that fluoride ions ( $\text{F}^-$ ) are good axial ligands for  $[\text{Fe}^{\text{III}}(\text{PcS})]$ . Figure 5 depicts the concentration changes of RhB when KF at different concentrations was added to the  $\text{RhB}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system. It can

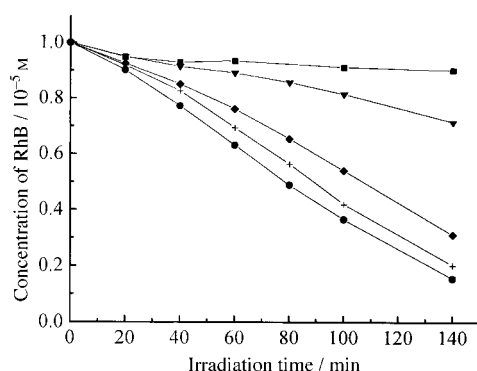


Figure 5. Effect of adding fluoride ions ( $\text{F}^-$ ) at different concentrations to the reaction system ( $\text{RhB } 1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ,  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})] 1.4 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ , and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$ ) on the degradation rate of RhB. The initial concentrations of KF:  $4.5 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M}$  (■),  $4.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ M}$  (▼),  $4.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$  (◆),  $4.5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ M}$  (+), and no KF (●). pH 3.

be seen that the degradation of RhB was gradually inhibited with increasing concentration of fluoride. Addition of 450 equivalents of KF versus RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ) significantly inhibited the degradation rate of RhB; meanwhile, it was also found that during the irradiation of the  $\text{RhB}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2/\text{KF}$  system, no concentration variations of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  were observed. These results indicate that  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  will lose the photocatalytic activity if the axial positions of the central iron ion are occupied by fluoride ions instead of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$ .

**Effect of pH:** Figure 6 presents the effect of pH on the oxidative degradation rate of Rhodamine B and Orange II in the  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible light irradiation. Evidently, in this catalytic system, the degradation reaction,

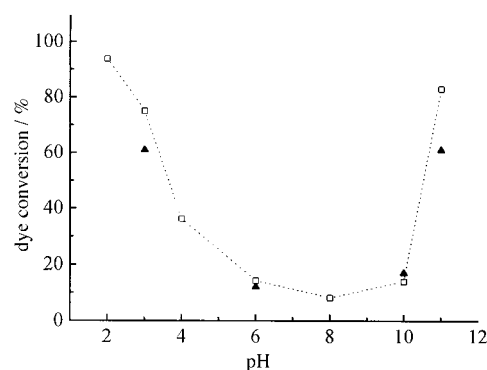


Figure 6. Effect of pH on the photodegradation of RhB (□) and Orange II (▲) in the reaction system containing RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ )/Orange II ( $2.5 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ),  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})] (1.4 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M})$ , and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 (1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M})$  within 100 min of visible light irradiation.

distinct from the (photo-)Fenton reaction, in which iron ions will cause the precipitation of  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot n\text{H}_2\text{O}$  at pH greater than 3,<sup>[11]</sup> can proceed in a wide range of pH from 2 to 11. For an initial solution containing RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M}$ ),  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})] (1.4 \times 10^{-5} \text{ M})$ , and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2 (1 \times 10^{-3} \text{ M})$ , 95% conversion of RhB at pH 2, 75% at pH 3, 38% at pH 4, and 15% at pH 6 were observed within 100 min of irradiation. When the degradation reaction was conducted in alkaline media, the conversion rate of RhB at the same irradiation time was 10% at pH 8, 15% at pH 10, and 83% at pH 11. For the Orange II/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system, almost the same photodegradation tendency of Orange II as RhB was also obtained in a wide range of pH. Evidently, the photodegradation of both RhB and Orange II in the  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system can still proceed at higher rates even under alkaline conditions, which is superior to the Fenton reaction.

**Photodegradation of RhB and Orange II with monochromatic light excitation:** Taking into consideration that RhB, Orange II, and  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  all can absorb visible light, we employed a kind of monochromatic light (with a Japan Optical Co. Interference filter  $\lambda = 640 \pm 10 \text{ nm}$ ) near to the maximum absorption wavelength of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  only to excite  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$ . In the monochromatic light range, RhB and Orange II have a low light absorption. Under monochromatic light irradiation in the  $\text{RhB}/[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system, the photodegradation rate of RhB as well as the photoefficiency (herein symbolized as  $\xi$ ) of RhB were examined, respectively. The photon flow of the 500 W halogen lamp at  $640 \pm 10 \text{ nm}$  determined by Reineckate actinometry<sup>[12]</sup> ( $0.025 \text{ M}$ ,  $50 \text{ mL}$ ) was  $1.0 \times 10^{-8} \text{ einsteins}^{-1}$ . The photodegradation rate of RhB with the monochromatic light excitation under the same conditions as those employed for the photon flow measurements is shown in Figure 7. Combined with the photon flow data measured, the photoefficiency obtained by observation of the changes in the absorption spectra with  $640 \pm 10 \text{ nm}$  monochromatic light irradiation was  $\xi = 0.004$  for the RhB degradation within 40 min of photoreaction in the  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system. It was also found that upon excitation of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  by monochromatic light irradiation, Orange II could also be degraded at a faster rate compared with the reaction in the dark (see Figure 7).

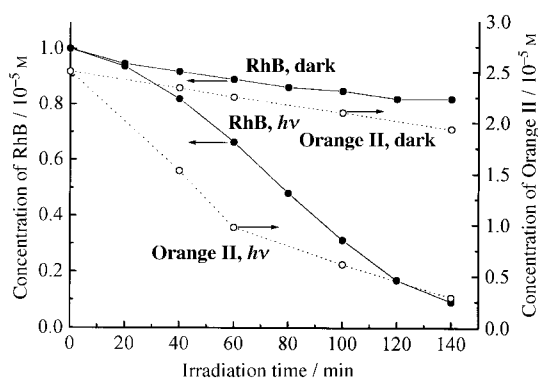
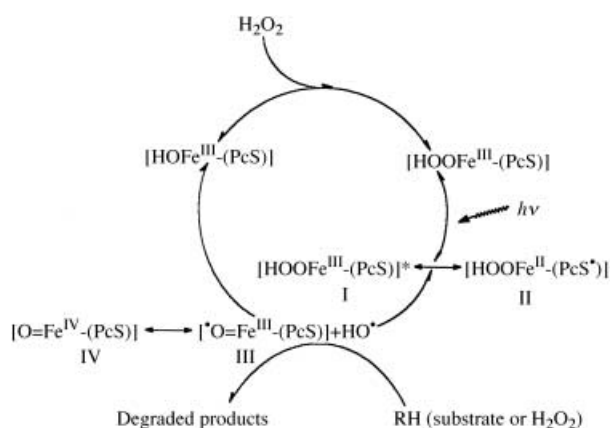


Figure 7. Degradation of RhB ( $1 \times 10^{-5}$  M)/Orange II ( $2.5 \times 10^{-5}$  M) as a function of irradiation time under monochromatic light irradiation ( $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 640 \pm 10$  nm) in the aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  ( $1.4 \times 10^{-5}$  M)/ $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  ( $1 \times 10^{-3}$  M) solutions.

**Reaction mechanism discussion:** Based on all the above results, a reasonable mechanism for the degradation of organic pollutants, especially for the primary reaction, in the aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible light irradiation is outlined in Scheme 1.



Scheme 1. Proposed photodegradation mechanism of organic pollutants in the aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible light irradiation.

In an aqueous solution,  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  is more likely to exist in the form of aquo complex ( $[\text{HOFe}^{\text{III}}(\text{PcS})]$ ).<sup>[3]</sup> Early work has demonstrated that the primary chemistry of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  involves nucleophilic addition to the electrophilic metal center of the transition metal complex at the axial ligand.<sup>[13–16]</sup> Thus, in the present system  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  is added to the iron center of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  to give  $[\text{HOOFe}^{\text{III}}(\text{PcS})]$ . Upon visible light irradiation,  $[\text{HOOFe}^{\text{III}}(\text{PcS})]$  can be excited to form a transition state, which can also undergo metal–ligand charge transfer (MLCT) (see **I** and **II** in Scheme 1).<sup>[17]</sup> Then the bond  $[\text{HO}–\text{OFe}^{\text{III}}(\text{PcS})]$  of the transition state can be rapidly cleaved to generate the active species, namely,  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals and the high-valent iron-oxo species **III** or **IV** (see Scheme 1). Because the oxidative activity of  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals is much higher than that of species **III** or **IV**,<sup>[18–20]</sup> the photodegradative reaction with  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals is predominant in the organics/ $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible irradiation. These  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals generated by the photoreaction of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  and  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  will react immediately with organic pollutants and

degrade them effectively. Without organic pollutants in the  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system, the  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals could rapidly recombine with the species **III** or **IV** or react with  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  or themselves.

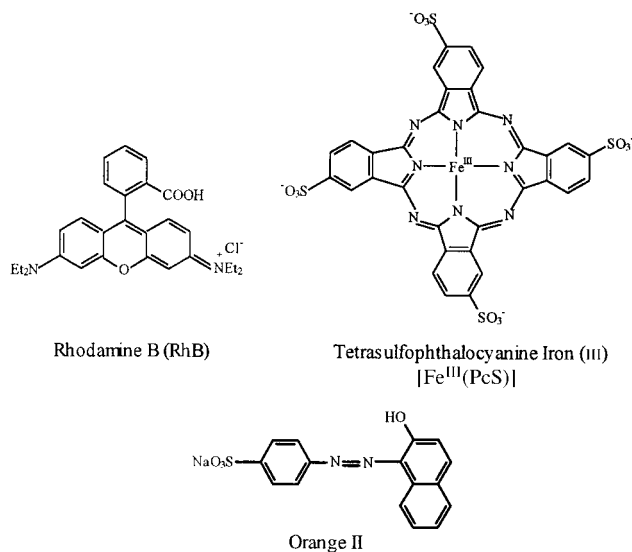
In addition, we carried out the experiments on the photodegradation of organic pollutants under nitrogen bubbling conditions. Almost the same degradation rates of pollutants were obtained as those under aerated conditions, and this indicates that  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  is not a good catalyst for reactions with oxygen but for reactions of  $\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  as reported in the literature.<sup>[21]</sup> Therefore, in terms of the current experimental results, we are unable to confirm that oxygen is bound to participate in the photoreaction, although the incorporation or the partial incorporation of oxygen in the Fenton reaction has been reported.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Conclusion

The refractory organic pollutants, Rhodamine B and Orange II, can be efficiently photodegraded in an aqueous  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  system under visible illumination. The process involves the photogeneration and reaction of  $\text{HO}^\bullet$  radicals. The photocatalytic system of  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]/\text{H}_2\text{O}_2$  under visible light irradiation provides another approach for the oxidative removal of nonbiodegradable organic pollutants in an aqueous system.

## Experimental Section

**Materials:** RhB was of analytical reagent grade and used without further purification. Orange II was obtained from Fluka Co.  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  was prepared according to a method in the literature.<sup>[23]</sup> Hydrogen peroxide (30 wt %) was obtained from Beijing Chemicals Co. The reagent 5,5-dimethyl-1-pyrroline-*N*-oxide (DMPO) used as the spin-trapping agent was purchased from Sigma Chemical Co. Horseradish peroxidase (POD) was purchased from Huamei Biologic Engineering Co. and *N,N*-dimethyl-*p*-phenylenediamine (DPD) reagent from Merck (p.a.). The pH of the solutions was adjusted by diluted aqueous solution of NaOH or  $\text{HClO}_4$ . Deionized and double distilled water was used throughout the study. For reference, the structures of RhB, Orange II, and  $[\text{Fe}(\text{PcS})]$  are shown below.



**Photoreactor and light source:** A 500 W halogen lamp (Institute of Electric Light Source, Beijing) was positioned inside a cylindrical Pyrex vessel surrounded by a jacket with circulating water (Pyrex) to cool the lamp. The jacket was wrapped in a piece of black paper with a small window. A cutoff filter was placed on the small window (diameter 3 cm) to remove completely wavelengths less than 470 nm and to ensure irradiation only by visible light. The center distance between the reaction vessel and the light source was 10 cm.

**Procedures and analyses:** Unless otherwise noted, all the irradiation experiments were carried out in a Pyrex vessel (60 mL) in aerated solution at an initial pH of 3.0 adjusted with HClO<sub>4</sub>. At given irradiation time intervals, samples (3 mL) were taken out and then analyzed by observation of variations in UV/Vis spectra with a Lambda Bio20 spectrophotometer (Perkin-Elmer). Electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) signals of radicals spin-trapped by DMPO were examined with a Bruker EPR 300E spectrometer; the irradiation source was a halogen lamp with a cutoff filter ( $\lambda > 470$  nm). The settings for the EPR spectrometer were: center field, 3486.70 G; sweep width, 100.0 G; microwave frequency, 9.82 GHz; power, 5.05 mW. The photodegradation of the small molecule (salicylic acid, SA, no absorption in visible region) was analyzed by High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) on an Inertsil ODS-3 5  $\mu$ m column (250  $\times$  4.6 mm) at room temperature. The HPLC system consisted of a 7725 autoinjector fitted with a 20  $\mu$ L sample loop, a Dionex P580 pump, and a built-in UVD 340s diode array detector. Signals for SA were detected at 295 nm by using an eluent composed of methanol/water (70:30, v/v) at a flow rate of 1.0 mL min<sup>-1</sup>. HPLC analysis was immediately done after sampling. Hydrogen peroxide concentration was measured by the DPD method<sup>[10]</sup> (a photometric method), in which the DPD reagent is oxidized by H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> based on the peroxidase catalyzed reaction ( $\lambda_{\text{max}} = 531$  nm,  $\epsilon = 21\,000\text{ M}^{-1}\text{ cm}^{-1}$ ). The intensity of the monochromatic light was determined by Reineckate actinometry.

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