



## **NEWSLETTER: 10 OCTOBER 2024 - CHINA PART 5**

This is the fifth and last newsletter on our short-trip to Hangzhou, China, but this newsletter also goes about a very malacological subject: pearls, the dream items produced by oysters around the globe: for the enhancement of women mainly, and the pleasure of the men enjoying their better beauty.

On top, a classic view of a water-field where thousands of oysters are growing beautiful pearls inside. Each oyster is monitored and attached to a floating bottle in this case. This is a scenery near Zhuji, Shaoxing, in China.

Our last full day in China was dedicated to "pearls", a subject we are expert in. Especially in wild natural pearls and the gold pearls of the Philippines. So, for Sheila, Philippe and myself, this was a major important visit. Dr. Qian and He Jing were perfect organizers for that day, and they took us to the pearl city where the biggest "pearl market" on the planet is situated: in Zhuji village, Shaoxing, Zhejiang, China.

In this region the pearl industry developed in something the planet has not seen before: thousands of hectares of pearl ponds, where millions of oysters are producing patiently beautiful pearls.

The trip was well organized: Dr. Qian brought us first to a kind of "information" center, where we were shortly briefed on the basics of pearl farming. It was situated in the center of several pearl ponds. And we got a demonstration of opening pearl oysters, two oysters of one year old and three oysters of 3 years old, the latter with big pearls: the pearls we received as a gift, and they are now in a corner between my antiques. I'm indeed very addicted to mother-of-pearl, as well sculptured as natural as in the shape of pearls. This center also harbored a magnificent display room of furniture decorated with mother-of-pearl. Here some photos of that special "stop", where we got like a baptism in "the Chinese pearl industry".



*The demonstration area, where we got a speed-course on pearl breeding techniques.*



*A field with glass balls, where below hundreds of pearl oysters are living.*





*Our group that day, with Dr. Qian in white near the center.*



*A photo in a demonstration aquarium, showing us how the oysters are kept in plastics, a tube going through a hole in the oyster towards the animal feeding it constantly.*





*We then got a demonstration of “opening oysters with pearl”. Here a one ear old Hyriopsis cumingii with half a dozen small pearls.*



*Here a three-year-old Hyriopsis cumingii with a big pearl. On the right: after 5 oysters, the pearls I got as a gift.*

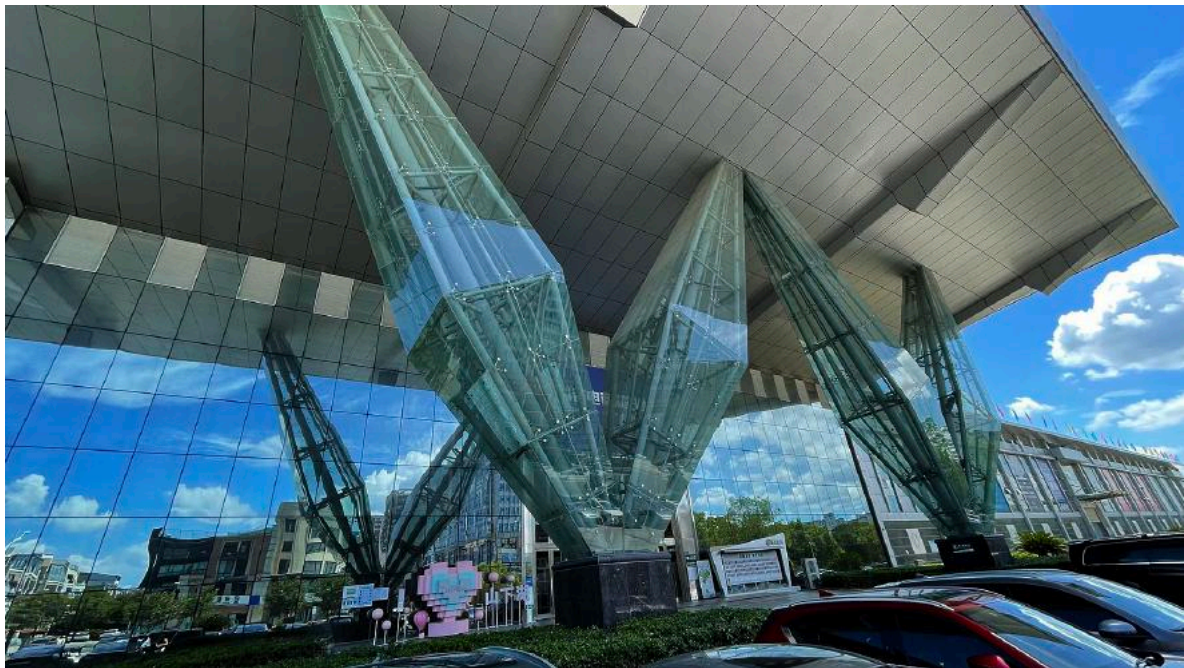


*A demonstration room, with furniture decorated with mother of pearl of the farms.  
True pieces of art.*

After the demonstration, our guests took us to the biggest trade center in China, The Zhuji Pearl Market, Zhuji in Shaoxing. This is an ensemble of several hectares containing hundreds of pearl shops, sorting out the production of pearls in quality, colors and so on. Building jewels as an extra industry.

The total production of the freshwater pearls of China, brought in last year more than 2 billion euro in turn over. This is no longer a small occasional occupation, but a major industry that provides in the livelihood of millions of people.





*One of the several “grand entrances” of the Zhuji Pearl Market place.*



*Us inside, there are hundreds of small to large pearl dealer shops inside.  
All is very clean, dust free and beautiful.*





*This is how most shops look.*



*Dr. Qian got apparently friends inside these are the owners of "Tian Di Run Pearl": they received us very well, with a nice meal, and here we are taking a snack with them.*





*A small part of their business: all necklaces, with each individual pearl selected on color, shine and size and put into necklaces.*



*A stockroom of millions of pearls.*





*Ladies selecting pearls and mounting necklaces.*



*A fine set of necklaces we could purchase, part of my small shell collection now.  
The black pearls are “colored”, the three other necklaces are “natural” colors.*

After the amazing experience of “a day in pearls”, we headed for a fine rest in our Hangzhou Shangri La, as the next day was long and exhausting: 4 hours back by car to Shanghai airport, the almost 4 hours flight to Manila, then the flight to Cebu. With all waiting times between, we were supposed to land on Mactan Island at 1 am the next morning. But the pilot missed the runway and made an “overshoot of the runway”. He went up to Sogod before turning and give a second chance, which took like 25 minutes. But finally, we landed safe and Mona, the wife of Philippe, picked us up at 2 in the morning. We were truly tired, and it was almost 4 o’clock before we could join the bed for a well-deserved rest.

The next day in the afternoon, we could visit Conchology, Inc., pick up the news from our employees, and plan upcoming works.

Guido T. Poppe  
For Conchology, Inc.