

## ***How are the Pearls Formed?***



Pure pearls are very precious. You will be surprised to know that only a small sea-creature, oyster makes them. An oyster can crawl on the ground also. The biggest tragedy with this little creature is that fish of the sea or the bigger members of its own family eat it away. When the oyster comes to the sea-shore to save its life, man eats it. In order to protect itself, it forms a hard shell around its body with a unique substance called 'nacre' or mother of Pearl. Pearls are made within this hard cover.

The discovery of pearls is an interesting story. Some four thousand years ago, a Chinese was suffering from hunger. To satiate his hunger he opened some oysters to eat. Inside one oyster he found one small round shining ball. The shining ball-like thing was later on called pearl.

Whenever, by chance, a sand particle goes inside the shell of an oyster and rubs against the animal's tender body in order to soothe this irritation, it starts depositing layers upon layers, of the shell material on this particle. These layers are made up, of calcium carbonate. After sometime the formation of the pearl inside the shell is completed. The pearl so formed is round, white and shining. This is called-pure pearl. However, the pearls are, not essentially white only. Their colors may be black, white, rose, pale blue, yellow, green, and mauve also.

Man has now developed some techniques of making artificial pearls. Under these techniques sand particles are introduced inside the shell: After two or three years, when the shell is taken out of water, a pearl is found inside it. These pearls are called cultured pearls. Japan has perfected the technique of making beautiful cultured pearls, since pure natural pearls are very costly, generally we purchase pearls developed by these artificial techniques. On the 7th May, 1934, a pearl was found in Philippines measuring 23 cm with a diameter of 13 cm. This pearl weighed about 6.37 kg. This pearl was called Pearl of Laozi.