



Creative Concretions, Pearls and Publication: The Philippine Journal of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery on its Thirtieth Year

“Who, on finding one pearl of great value,
went and sold all that he had and bought it.”¹

Matthew 13:46

The traditional thirtieth anniversary symbol is the pearl. Pearls are calcareous concretions of nacre formed through a biomineralization process incited by an irritant in the tissue of bivalve mollusks, producing concentric layers of crystal-form CaCO_3 (aragonite or calcite) and an organic binding agent, conchiolin.^{2,3} Interestingly, the modern thirtieth anniversary symbol is the diamond. Whether it is reflective of the fast-food generation penchant for instant gratification, or a commentary on their transient perspective on relations to fast-track the traditional diamond jubilee, the pearl teaches a lesson all its own. In contrast to the fiery metamorphosis of carbon to brilliant diamond, pearls are examples of slower creative processes overcoming potential destruction, or patiently making the best of a bad situation, demonstrated by the lowly oyster. As Federico Fellini put it, “All art is autobiographical; the pearl is the oyster’s autobiography.”⁴

There is great value in painstakingly producing a work of art or craft, science or technology. The mentifacts and artifacts conceived and created by our minds and hands arise from our interactions with the geosphere, biosphere and sociosphere. Our research in these spheres reciprocally affects them in a continuing spiral of experience, reflection and expression as our findings are published and disseminated to others. Moreover, the elements that make up the components of our research and publication activity, including the materials we use and the methods by which they are sourced, used and disposed of, also affect these spheres of our existence, and affect us in return.⁵

Our journal is itself the product of countless hours of writing, editing and review by our authors, editors and reviewers. From initial manuscript submission, through research design and methodological evaluation and reference checks, repeated form and content editing and revision, to external review and more revisions, each manuscript is painstakingly shepherded through the editing and review process, to final copyediting, galley proofing and approval of accepted manuscripts. The entire process can take anywhere from two weeks (for well-written manuscripts compliant with Instructions to Authors and excellent reviewers) to two years (for more challenging manuscripts, with equally challenged authors or reviewers). The online Editorial Management System has increased the number of overseas submissions, reflected in our growing international contributions. Our publication is disseminated electronically and in print to subscribers and medical libraries and indexed on multiple databases. It is a pearl of great value to many who benefit from the knowledge and wisdom contained in its pages, and who in turn use their learning for the good of their colleagues, trainees, students, patients, families and communities.

It would not have been possible without the contributions of our authors, the dedication of our editors, the zeal of our reviewers, the support of our specialty society and the patronage of our readers. Thank you. We especially thank our Editorial Assistant (Weng) and our Layout (Virgie) and Artistic (Erika) Producers and Copywriter (Patti) for their strong, silent background support. Another milestone has been achieved. We are now thirty years old. *Maraming Salamat Po!*

¹Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1952 [2nd edition, 1971] by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

²Saruwatari K, Matsui T, Mukai H, Nagasawa H, Kogure T. Nucleation and growth of aragonite crystals at the growth front of nacles in pearl oyster, *Pinctada fucata*. *Biomaterials*. 2009 Jun;30(16):3028-34.

³Rousseau M, Meibom A, Gèze M, Bourrat X, Angellier M, Lopez E. Dynamics of sheet nacre formation in bivalves. *J Struct Biol*. 2009 Mar;165(3):190-5.

⁴Walter E. “Federico Fellini: Wizard of Film.” *Atlantic Monthly*. 1965 Dec;216(6): 62.

⁵Goleman D. *Ecological intelligence: How knowing the hidden impacts of what we buy can change everything*. 2009. New York: Macmillan.

Prof. José Florencio F. Lapeña, Jr., M.A.,M.D.
Editor-in-Chief