



Hello Students,

I am always seeking ways to improve these lessons. With some of the links no longer available, I wanted to credit them for the information I found at the time they were on the internet. My solution is a new color code. For sites that are no longer available, but were the source of information in the transcript, I have added an **orange highlight with blue text**. Also, there is another homework below, but you only have to choose one shell in question 1 and question 5.

Sending Seashell Blessings!
Shell

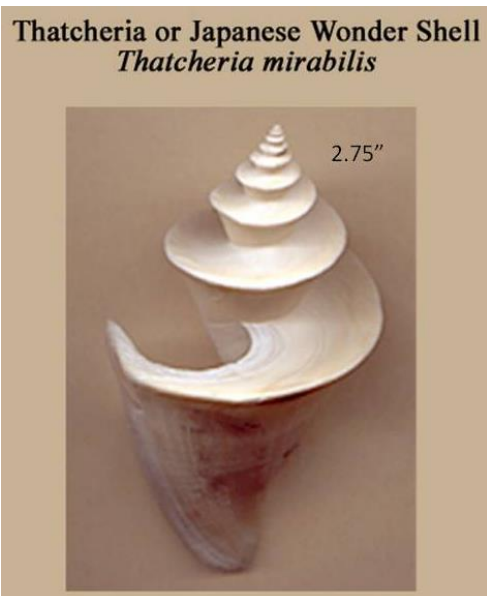
INDEPENDENT STUDY: Module 2, Class 20

Please note: The pictures and comments in the transcript and recording below have been gathered over many years and where possible, I attribute them to their original source. If anyone connected with these photographs or comments would like them removed, please notify me and I will be happy to comply.

The video recording of Class 20 is around 25 minutes long.

Class 20: Shell #s 99,70,73,91, 98, 104

In recent lessons, we have undertaken an exploration of the diverse ways shells interact with man. We covered religion, medicine, artists, and jewelers, and we were just touching on architecture. Inspired by the incredible shapes created by mollusks for their seashell homes, man has been influenced to construct pagodas in the orient, and a remarkable opera house in Australia. Let's see how the shells worked their architectural magic in the USA.



This is a **Thatcheria**, also called by the common name of Japanese Wonder Shell. It is **shell #99** in *Ocean Oracle*, and its meaning is “*Respect*.” Due to its quite unusual structure, when the first Thatcheria was discovered it was considered to be a freak of nature, a “monstrosity”.

<http://www.jaxshells.org/japanese.htm> history of this “monstrosity” Thatcheria

In describing the species, G. F. Angas said "This very remarkable shell, quite unlike anything hitherto met with, was recently brought from Japan by Mr. Charles Thatcher," and, because Angas was at a loss to place it in a known genus, Mr. Thatcher acquired an unexpected immortality. Conchologists, puzzled by its peculiar appearance, were equally doubtful where to place it systematically and often they echoed the words of G. W. Tryon: "That this shell is a scaliform monstrosity cannot be doubted, but what may be its normal form is not so readily ascertained".

No others were known until the early 1930's when several, exactly comparable, were fished up in Japanese waters; it was no longer a monstrosity and its systematic position was established a few years later. It is a member of the Turridae.

As more specimens were found, their commercial value escalated, and high prices were paid for them until the 1950's; from then on they were common enough to be obtained fairly cheaply.

http://homepage1.nifty.com/seashells/tokyobay/mirabilis_e.html Japanese history of Thatcheria: first shown in 1775, next shown in 1843...68 years later. This site is no longer available, but is the source for quote below:

Remarks

This shell was known as rare shell since Edo age in Japan. Therefore, it took 68 years from the first showing in Kigaizufu (1775) to showing in Mokuhachifu (1843) next. The specimen shown in Kigaizufu of Kimura Kenkado was Tamaoki Kiichi's collection. And the one shown in Mokuhachifu of Musashi Sekiju was Tamaru Kansens collection. Thus, even authors who were ardent collectors were not able to collect this shell by themselves. Body whorl can be weakly tied up usually. However, the figured specimen is a little fat. The same type one as this is drawn in Kigaizufu.

Many years later, more specimens were found, and all looked identical to the original. When it comes to Interaction with Man, it is believed that this shell inspired Frank Lloyd Wright to construct the spiral portion of the Guggenheim Art Museum in New York City.

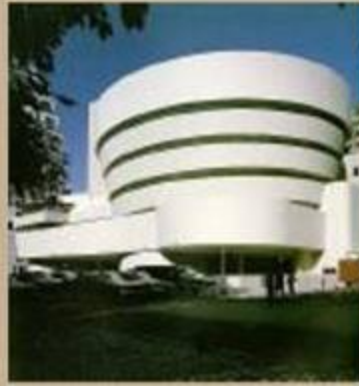
The Thatcheria went from being considered a freak, to gaining the respect of a master architect. It is interesting to consider the similar fate shared by the Thatcheria and Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright's unique vision for architecture suffered the same reception as the first Thatcheria. Since “Wright disliked the urban environment, his buildings developed a style quite different from other architects of the time. He utilized natural materials, skylights and walls of windows to embrace the natural environment. He built skyscrapers that mimicked trees, with a central trunk and many branches projecting outward. He proclaimed that shapes found in the environment should be not only integrated, but should become the basis of American architecture...A great example is the Larkin Company Administration Building in Buffalo, New York (1903), and the Guggenheim Museum in New York City (1943), which resembles the structure of a shell or a snail.”

<http://spirals.homestead.com/Culture/Architecture/Architecture.html> Source of quote below:

“What we must know in organic architecture is not found in books. It is necessary to have recourse to Nature with a capital N in order to get an education. Necessary to learn from trees, flowers, shells – objects which contain truths of form following function. If we stopped there, then it would be merely imitation. But if we dig deep enough...we arrive at secrets of form related to purpose that would make of the tree a building and of the building a tree.” Frank Lloyd Wright



Guggenheim Art Museum
designed by
Frank Lloyd Wright



Originally ridiculed by society, Frank Lloyd Wright eventually earned respect as the master architect of a building that houses artistic masterpieces. Some consider the Guggenheim to be a work of art itself.

<http://www.planetclaire.org/flw/gm.html>



Wright's vision was to mimic the inside of a seashell and his creation included an elevator so that the visitor could start at the top of the museum, and view the artwork by walking down the descending spiral ramp.

This picture shows the museum from this perspective. You may notice that this duplicates what we learned about the method of shell growth...from apex to aperture in a series of whorls. His idea is currently ignored, as museum exhibits are designed to be viewed by walking up the spiral ramp.

Above information taken from this website:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Lloyd_Wright

(scroll down to **Significant later works**)

When Thatcheria is in a reading, the client seeks to be respected as a way to increase self-esteem. However, if people have been disrespectful, this client often remains silent due to a concern over hurting other people's feelings. The client does not realize that this silence backfires. Subliminally, the client is saying "I don't mind if you treat me this way." This gives other people the message that the client does not respect him/herself, so why should they? If nothing is said, it appears to grant permission for more of the same treatment.

Thatcheria reminds us that we teach people how to treat us. It cautions that in seeking respect, the first person who we need to respect us is ourselves. If we let it be known that we will not accept disrespectful treatment, our silence will no longer grant assumed permission. As we claim entitlement to better treatment, the offenders will have a reason to alter their behavior. In the quest for respect, we must remember to respect ourselves.

While we are on the subject of the connection between shells and architecture, here are examples of two more homes inspired by seashells... the Chambered Nautilus and Conch shells.



<http://www.demilked.com/nautilus-house-giant-seashell/>

This amazing shell-shaped house was designed by architect Javier Senosiain of Arquitectura Organica and built in 2006. As strange as it looks, it's a real house built for a young family with two children who were tired living in a conventional home and wanted to change to one integrated to nature.

Inspired by the work of Gaudi and Frank Lloyd Wright, the house is dominated by smooth surfaces, spiral stairs and natural plantings that makes it feel like you're living inside a snail.

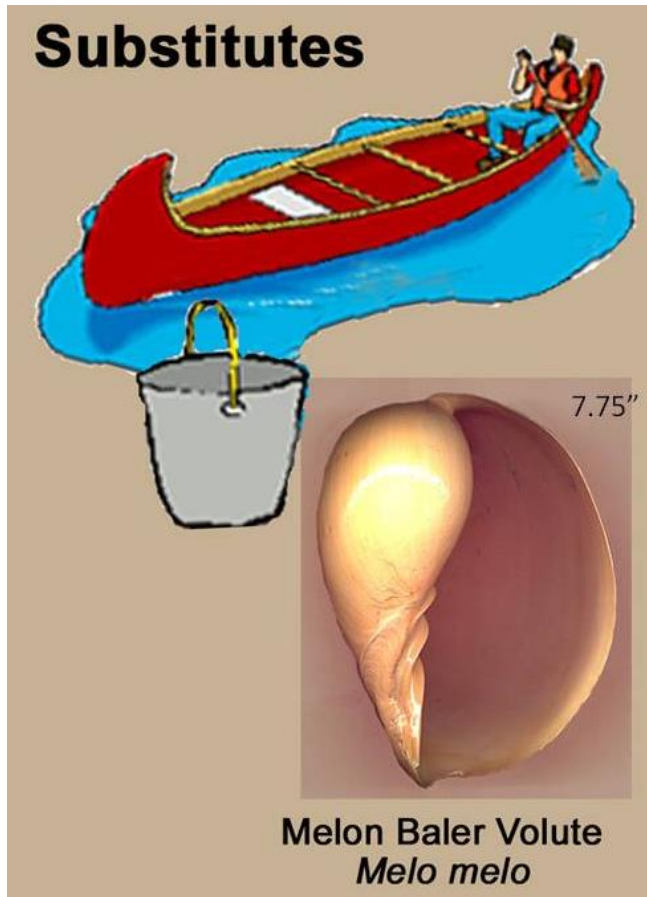


<http://www.isla-mujeres.net/shellhouse/>

As we leave this topic, here is a link with more examples of shells interacting with humans in art and architecture.

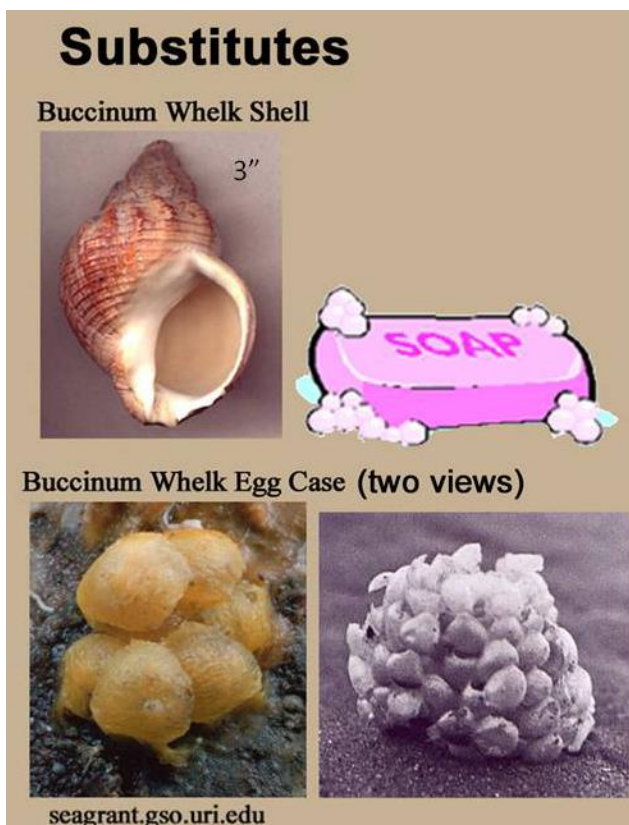
http://www.manandmollusc.net/beginners_uses/5.html

Let's explore other ways shells have interacted with man. Due to their size and shape, shells have substituted for various utensils. Throughout history, shells have served as cups, bowls, ladles, and spoons. Filling a shell with oil and lighting the oil made lamps. These are generalities, but there are examples of shells with specialized functions.



This image allows me to reacquaint you with the Melon Baler, shell #103 in *Ocean Oracle*, which is used as a bucket to bail out canoes when they take on too much water. This allowed the meaning to reflect “*Needing to bale out of a situation.*”

Do you remember the cameraman who was attracted to this shell when he had a brother eating him out of house and home?



You have also met the **Buccinum Whelk** who helped us understand the significance of right and left-handed growth. Although we were able to see a mutated Buccinum Whelk, that is not the quality that served to make its contribution to the language of seashells.

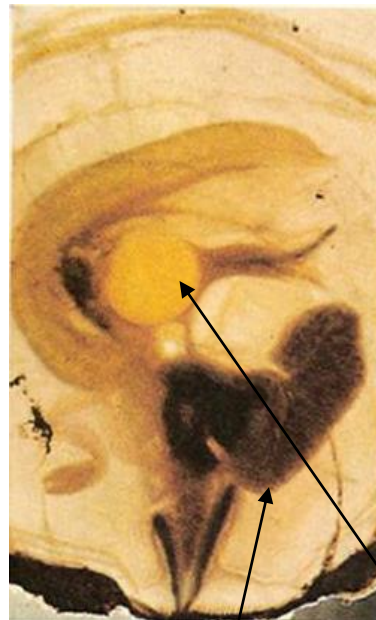
Instead, it is the egg case of this whelk that drew sailors' attention. Back when soap was prohibitively expensive, sailors used these egg cases as a substitute for soap. Their consistency resembles a loofa sponge, and they were called sailors' scrub balls. Here you see a Buccinum whelk and two photographs of their egg cases. Because of its use as soap, in shell divination, **shell #70** means “*Needing to come clean or confess something.*”

Windowpane Oyster or Capiz shells *Placuna placenta*



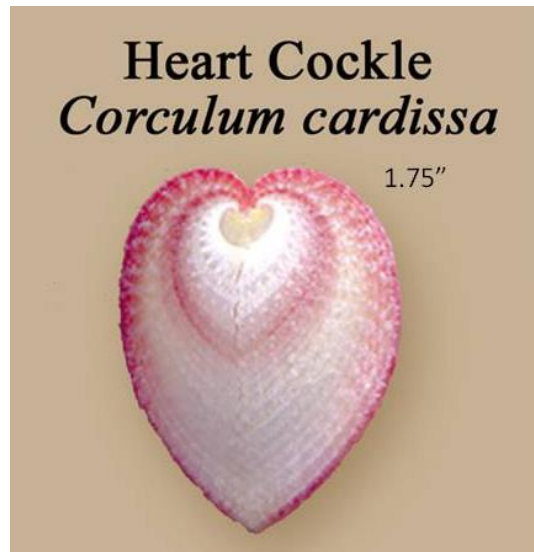
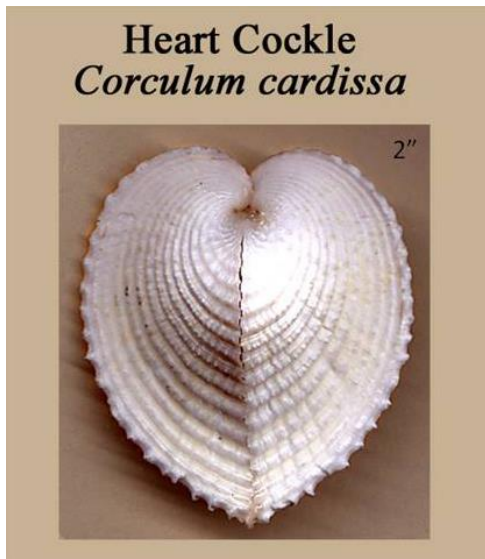
Now for a shell that is not in *Ocean Oracle* but serves a very specialized function. Allow me to introduce you to the Windowpane Oyster. They are also called Placuna Oysters, and Capiz Shells (for the name of the Phillipine Province where they are found.)

The first common name gives you a huge hint as to the way they have interacted with man. The shells of these oysters are remarkably translucent, and in their native habitat, the two halves are only a fraction of an inch apart. The shells are so flat that you can stack them like pancakes.



These two pictures above, are from a National Geographic Magazine from 1969. In the left photo, you see a stack of Placuna oyster shells. It is amazing to think that an animal lives between the two halves of these shells. The photo on the right shows the oyster inside its shell. You will increase your appreciation for this picture when you realize that you are looking at the mollusk inside its shell. The top shell has not been removed, rather, there is a strong light shining through the shell. You can see the oyster's dark stomach and adductor muscle partially surrounded by the gills.

If you were to hold the shell up toward the light, and place your hand behind the shell, you could see every one of your fingers. Because of this quality, these oyster shells were used for windows in 15th century Spanish homes. They are still used in crafts as glass substitutes today. Although this shell is not in *Ocean Oracle*, (When I wrote *Ocean Oracle*, I did not have a digital camera and I could not scan it due to the transparent nature of the shell) when I work with this shell it denotes a “*Window of opportunity*”, a brief time to do something beneficial...the clock is ticking.



This next shell is called a **Heart Cockle**. It may not surprise you this has been a symbol of love throughout the ages. Sailors gave these shells to their wives and sweethearts as tokens of their affection. The shell on the left is the Heart Cockle in *Ocean Oracle*, **shell #73**, meaning "Love, romance." After writing *Ocean Oracle*, I discovered that these shells come in other colors. Those of you with *Ocean Wisdom* will find the shell on the right, a different Heart Cockle, on the back cover.

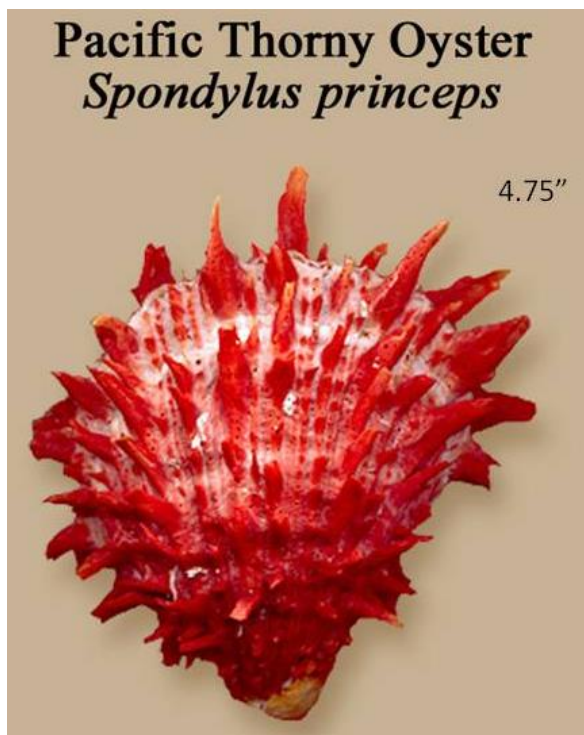
I wanted you to see the range of colors these shells can be...all found in their native habitat in the Philippines. I assembled a few more of my Heart Cockles for you.



One of the most amazing to me is the one in the upper right that looks like it has fire inside it. I will admit that I was very fortunate with these shells. I was in that store in Sanibel that I have mentioned a few times, and had just read about these colorful versions of the Heart Cockle. I asked the proprietor if he had any, and he led me upstairs where he stored all the shells that he had not yet placed in the shop for the public. He had an enormous

unopened bag of these Heart Cockles, and he granted me permission to open the bag and take whatever shells I wanted. The fire Heart Cockle was in that bag. One thing to point out for you is that these are bivalves, they are comprised of two shells, but notice that they are right and left halves instead of top and bottom halves like a clam or oyster or other cockles. If you recall, when we were studying mollusk anatomy, we learned that the cockle has a very powerful foot muscle that allows it to jump. This gave cockle shells meanings with jumping themes... Jump for joy, jump through hoops, etc. That was way back in our second class. Do any of you remember this jumping theme?

Heart cockles do not share this foot muscle anatomy; hence the meaning is not based on the anatomy of the mollusk like cockles #8 and #9 in *Ocean Oracle*. Instead, it is connected to its interaction with man as a symbol of love and it is #73 in your book.



The next shell I want to discuss with you is the Pacific Thorny Oyster, scientific name *Spondylus princeps*. Ancient Andean cultures believed that their gods controlled every aspect of their world. Survival depended on seeking the gods' favor. To this end, human sacrifices were offered as "food" to appease the gods. It was hoped that food would bring rewards, for example, in the form of much-needed rain for their crops. Eventually, the practice of human sacrifices came into disfavor.

Because of their resemblance to the color of human blood, these oysters became the new food for the gods. The Pacific Thorny Oyster is shell # 91 in *Ocean Oracle*, and its meaning is "Depending on someone or something for survival." When this shell appears in a reading, it can indicate a codependent relationship.

A student in one of my workshops once had an "interesting" relationship with this shell. That is the only way I can describe it. When I teach in person, I use photographs in a 3-ring binder. When I flipped to the page with the Pacific Thorny Oyster on it, she looked visibly upset. The page had three other shells on it, and I wondered what caused this emotional reaction. When I began teaching, my hand covered over the Oyster in order to point to the shell I was focusing on at that moment. As I taught about the other three shells, her view of the Oyster was obscured by my hand. While the Oyster was covered, she visibly relaxed. This odd reaction was only apparent to me because the students were concentrating on the binder. I was the only one looking at the students. When it came time for me to speak about the Pacific Thorny Oyster, I mentioned Aztec human sacrifice, which provoked her to shout, "No wonder!" Then she apologized to the class for her outburst and told us that as soon as she saw that shell, she felt horrible. With a shaky voice, she continued to explain. Once she heard me speaking of the human sacrifice, it brought back a past life memory when she remembered being dressed to be taken to be sacrificed to the gods. The tears were streaming down her face as she repeated "I remember." The interesting thing is that I saw the emotion on her face before I mentioned the meaning of the shell, so this past-life memory is the only explanation I have for her reaction.

<http://www.abc.net.au/science/articles/1999/04/08/21302.htm> Incan mummies found with spondylus shells

<http://www.manandmollusc.net/peru2.html> Offerings to the Andean Gods



Next we encounter the **African Land Snail**. This is the only shell I know of that actually had a bounty placed upon it “wanted dead or alive.” This is because of the damage it caused. It did not kill people like the cones, but these vegetarian land snails destroyed crops. The bounty came from the country of Borneo where the African snail was thought to kill more of the tea crop than all the bombs of WWII. However, due to the lack of predators, and to unwitting tourists, these animals had spread from their original homeland in Africa to Ceylon, Borneo, and Japan. As I continued to follow this over the years, they made their way to Hawaii, and even to Florida. You can tell by the size of my shell that this snail lived a very long life.

Because of the agricultural havoc they wreaked, to the point of requiring a bounty on the adults and the eggs, in *Ocean Oracle* **shell # 98** means “*Massive devastation, a destructive force affecting many.*”

I noticed that the clients attracted to this shell have something in common. If the person inflicting the damage were only harming them, they would never speak up. It is when others are being harmed that these clients become willing to take action. A useful question for these clients to consider is: Why isn't harm to them alone enough of a reason to say this treatment is unacceptable?

Animals that are extinct: In the attempt to stop the African Land Snail, here is the story of the effect on innocent bystanders. Information below was taken from this website:

<http://www.care2.com/c2c/groups/disc.html?gpp=2116&pst=58008>

The demise of Polynesian Partula snails. Over the last 30 years, French Polynesia has seen one of the most dramatic examples of extinction caused by an invasive species. Seventy-two percent of the Partula snail species native to the Society Islands have gone extinct as a result of the introduced predatory wolf snail (Euglandina rosea). The wolf snail was originally introduced to Tahiti in 1975 as a biological control agent with the aim of halting the spread of the giant African snail (Achatina fulica). However, it instead developed a taste for the smaller Partulid snails and their rapid decline began. The invasive Wolf Snail was not confined to Tahiti. It spread rapidly, at a rate of approximately 1.5 km² per year. By 1977 it had reached Moorea and by 1992 it was present on all six Society Islands. The greatest loss of Partulid diversity occurred on the island of Raiatea. In a twelve-year period following the introduction of the wolf snail in 1986, all 33 native Partula species disappeared in the wild. Just four of Raiatea's Partula species remain alive in captivity. It is possible that the only species in the genus Samoana (S. attenuata) has also disappeared.

Precious Wentletrap *Epitonium scalare*



Now it is time to become reacquainted with the Precious Wentletrap. You met this shell in Class 17 in your introduction to shell reading. We had a hypothetical client who liked the Nassa and the Money Cowrie, telling us that she was willing to do whatever it took in her moral compass to acquire money. When she also liked the Wentletrap, we discovered that she was willing to consider criminal behavior. So, you know the meaning of this shell, but we never discussed why.

Wentletrap means “winding stair” in Dutch.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/wentletrap> definition

The story of the Wentletrap’s Interaction with Man involves supply and demand. When some mollusks are born, they possess a shell and live exactly in the location of their birth. Others are born without a shell and drift through the ocean currents. By the time they form shells, you can find them in many locations. If man is not aware of the location where the mollusk dwells, there are very few shells available. When a few specimens are found, these rare shells are worth a fortune.

Such was the case with the Precious Wentletrap. In the 1600’s, when the first Wentletraps were found, nobody knew where to find more of them. The shell was extremely rare and fetched large sums of money. Up to \$1,000.00. Stories circulate that in the 1700’s some people in China decided to capitalize on this by creating rice-paste counterfeits that were sold as the genuine shell. When I wrote Ocean Oracle, I believed this story to be true. It was repeated in many of my seashell reference books. However, courtesy of the Internet, I can neither confirm nor deny this. Some sites sound like this is true, but another site from someone I respect hints that it could just be stories handed down. (See below). If it is true, the eventual discovery of large beds of Wentletraps devalued the shell and ended this fraudulent practice.

Shell #104 means “*Con man, fraud, deceit.*” This is not because of the mollusk, and not because of the shell, but because of man choosing to make copies of this shell selling them as the real thing. If it turns out that this never happened, the shell has been connected with this story for so long, that it still represents the meaning of fraud and deceit.

The following sites demonstrate the conflicted opinions on the existence of rice paste counterfeits. Neither site is still available online, but I have underlined the relevant sections for you to compare.

http://www.britishshellclub.org/pages/gallery/pdance/pd_04.htm S. Peter Dance is one of my favorite authors. I have learned a great deal about mollusks from his books. As you will see below, on this site from 2003, he alludes to the Chinese fakes, but does not claim this is a fact.

Specimen Information

Epitonium scalare, (L. 1758) - More than any other shell, a perfect example of the Precious Wentletrap reminds me of a beautifully modelled piece of porcelain. That specimens are supposed to have been made from rice paste suggests that I am not alone in regarding it as a supreme work of art and well worth the trouble of faking. If only two or three examples were known, how collectors would fight over it!

<http://www.eyefetch.com/image.aspx?ID=670515> Read the photographer's notes below:

Image Tags Photographer's Notes

The Wentletrap with its raised ribs and loosely coiled shell make it a natural wonder. In the mid-17th century it was a truly rare shell in great demand by wealthy collectors. For a while it was a most expensive shell with huge sums being paid by the aristocrats at popular auctions of the time. By the early 1700s, small quantities were being imported from China along with cleverly fabricated reproductions made from rice paste. The fakes were less durable than the real thing, and few remain today. One is known to exist in a private collection in Florida and another in England. Today, an old counterfeit Wentletrap is priceless, and a real one is obtainable for about fifteen dollars. Many specimens are gathered from soft corals in the Philippines, Taiwan, and Sri Lanka. Epitonium Scalare.



Since we began this class discussing architects, it seems fitting to end this class with a picture of the original architect of the Wentletrap Shell...the mollusk.

At least we can guarantee that this shell is not a fraud!

This photo is from the link below.

<http://www.jaxshells.org/talbot5.htm>

On the next page, you will find Homework Exercise #5. Please note that you only have to choose one shell in question #1 and question #5.

HOMEWORK EXERCISE #5 (Using Class 18-20)

Based upon what we have learned about the Interaction of humans with shells throughout history, please comment on the following:

1. In classes 18-20, you met the Money Cowrie, Idol's Eye, Isabella and Golden Cowries.

Please select one of these shells and tell me how it has interacted with humans and what meaning is assigned to this shell due to this interaction.

2. How has Red Abalone been used in connection with medicine and what meaning did it derive based upon this?

3. How has the Bullmouth Helmet been used by artists and what meaning did it derive based upon this?

4. What is the connection of the Thatcheria to architects, and what message does it embody based upon this?

5. Of the following 4 shells.... Heart Cockle #73, Pacific Thorny Oyster #91, African Land snail #98, and Precious Wentletrap#104, pick one and tell me how it interacted with humans and what meaning it gained as a result.