

FISHING JELLYFISH
TSI (SWISS TELEVISION)
ERFURT EXCHANGE 2007

4'40



- 1'01 This bay is in Thailand and is called Panganga. It is a strange place and has a dreamy almost magical atmosphere.
In that area the sea is full of rocky islands, of all shapes and sizes and none of them are lived on, but one day, quite unexpectedly, Panganga bay is full of life: dozens of boats and fishermen in long narrow canoes with at the end and a very long prow.
- 1'29 The fishermen look carefully at the surface of the sea searching for the strange animals they hope to fish.
- 1'36 There's one!... They use big nets with long handles to catch them. But are not fishing fish, they are fishing for jelly fish.
- 1'45 It's very hot, it is the height of summer and there is not a breath of wind... the water doesn't move around like when there are waves. So the temperature of the sea rises and this is why there are a lot of jelly fish, many more than usual. These jelly fish really are very big, more than a metre and a half wide and they move very slowly just under the surface of the sea.

- 2'12 On each canoe there is a man at the back, aft, who steers, and at the front, fore, there is a woman who looks for the jelly fish. When she sees one she signals to her partner to take the canoe closer, and then, as though she was using a giant hand she scoops the jelly fish up. It is very hard lifting up a jelly fish that might weigh up to 10 kilos, using a net with such a long handle! Not only that, but you have to keep your balance on the boat, which is moving all the time, and gets slippery with all the jelly fish in it.
- 2'46 They fish all day until the boat is very very heavy and lies dangerously low in the water.
- 2'56 The fishermen only want the mantello of the jelly fish and so they throw the tentacles and the parts they don't use back into the sea. They do this job straight away because it makes the boat lighter. And they do it with their bare hands, they don't care if the jelly fish sting and irritate the skin.
- 3'17 Since the fishing started, places have been set up where all the canoes go back to with the catches.
- 3'33 The fishermen put the jelly fish, one by one, into big plastic baskets. This is a hard job and they have to stand for a long time with their legs in muddy dirty water. With the jelly fish being very slippery it is not very easy to get them from with boat to the basket, holding them in your hands.
- 3'54 Everything is done by hand, there are no machines in the area able to help the fishermen lift and carry their heavy loads.
- 4'09 The fishermen gather all the jelly fish together in huge plastic tanks to be sold.
- 4'20 Everything has become sticky and slippery... the boats, the ground, the men themselves... and there are long pieces of slime hanging all over the place...

- 4'29 But the fishermen ignore all this, in the same way they don't seem to notice the smell all around them that gets stronger and stronger in the heat. For them, the jelly fish arriving is a chance to earn some money and this makes them forget all the rest.
- 4'46 This is chalk...
- 4'48 And this is salt. The chalk and the salt are thrown onto the jelly fish, one layer after another. This makes the gelatinous mass dry out and shrink.. Every day the jelly fish are cleaned and moved from one tank to another... And each time chalk and salt are added to soak up the what is left of the water.
As the days go by the jelly fish get lighter and stiffer.
- 5'14 After 15 days they have become a sort of yellowish leather and are ready to be put into the boxes in which they will be shipped away. They go to China and Japan where this kind of jelly fish is a delicacy to be cooked and eaten.
I can't tell you what they taste like and neither can the fishermen from Panganga, in Thailand, because they prefer to sell them than to eat them.