

Boat Outing To Tap Mun Chau - Sunday 20th May 2007



The beautiful Shell Ginger flower (*alipna speciosus*) seen on a previous visit to Tap Mun

The day of the outing did not augur well - at 06:30 a terrific rainstorm was pouring more than 30 mm/hr all over the Territory! The forecast was for thundery showers all day and did not disappoint, the rain didn't let up once! I really must take off my rain hat to the 12 hardy members who braved the elements and who made the best of a very wet day! Fortunately, the journey to and from Tap Mun was very smooth and although on the returning journey everyone decided to stay downstairs (Jacqui's most inviting glass of red wine might have been a factor here!) no one complained of a bumpy trip!

If I had had any thoughts of arriving at a deserted island because of the bad weather, those thoughts were immediately demolished, the place was heaving with other tour parties, so much so that Mr. Li had to negotiate a landing for us! It was obvious, by looking at the number of people walking through the village that our 2pm lunch booking at the New Hon Kee Restaurant was unlikely to be any earlier, but PC very kindly inquired as to whether we could have an earlier slot. The answer came back, "You can try and come at half past one but I have 2 tour parties coming in at 12 and they are very big groups!"

There was nothing for it, we had time to fill and we unanimously agreed to walk around the southern circumference of the island, at one point stopping to let the hoards of day trippers pass us on their way, possibly to their 12 O'Clock appointment at Peggy Lam's restaurant! The Rose Myrtle shrub gave an attractive splash of colour on either side of the paved path. The path stopped at the top of the hill where we all sheltered briefly under the roof of a pagoda, where we imagined a beautiful sea view! The pleasant grassy stretches, which gives the island its English name, were ignored this time but I had spent a very happy time picnicking on this spot when the weather has been hot and sunny. The walk to the pagoda had barely used up any of our time, so the general opinion was to return to the village and explore the very old and sympathetically restored Tin Hau Temple. Andrew and I found on the right of the temple a building which I discovered later to be the Water and Moon Palace dedicated to Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. By the time we emerged from our exploration it was nearing 1 o'clock and I didn't think it would hurt to go and see if our table for lunch was ready. On the walk down to the restaurant the beautiful Shell Ginger plant was in evidence by the side of the path, but I don't think that all of our group was able to see it, unfortunately.

This time Peggy Lam was able to let us sit at our table and order drinks while the staff were clearing away the debris of the first tour party! What a relief to discard our wet rain gear, enjoy the company of our fellow explorers, imbibe a few glasses of beer and enjoy Peggy's finest seafood cuisine! All things considered, the rain hadn't dampened our enthusiasm and we had made the best of the day!

Rose England