

## Hong Kong Natural History Society

### A Report on December 2009 Outing – Ma On Shan Country Park

Altogether 20 members and guests went on this December hike with four people joining at the starting point. We all assembled and began our journey at about 10:30 am. In fact, the coach took us right up from Shatin Pass to Tate's Ridge where we started with the Maclehoose Trail at about 400 metres above sea level.

First, we went along the path where we saw the Gin Drinker's line trenches. We occasionally stopped to look at the ruins and post marks left from pre-1941. On the way, we found a lot of *Gordonia* blooming. Hong Kong *Gordonia* (*Gordonia Axillaris*) – belong to the Theaceae species, is a native small evergreen tree which blazons large blossoms of bright yellow stamens with snow white petals. At this time of the year, the blossoms often add vibrancy to the dormant cold winter. Being very tolerant of pollution, *Gordonia* thrive in this location and blossoms that had fallen from the trees provided a carpeted trail for us to hop along.



After our first break at a picnic area overlooking Sai Kung, we started our ascent towards Buffalo Hill. It was not a bad day and on the track we saw grand views of mountains with Hebe Haven just on our right. We all regrouped and stopped for lunch on top of the hill at the junction near Fu Yung Pit. After a while, it was getting a bit too crowded as we found many other hikers also came to stay here for lunch. No sooner, after a long break, we made our slight descent to Mau Ping where everyone enjoyed another chatty break. As we were all such fit and wonderful hikers who went well ahead of our schedule, we needed to call the coach for an earlier pickup. Then, we made a gentle climb to Ngong Ping, had a short break before going down the Ma On Shan Country Trail to Mau Ping New Village where the bus picked us up at 4:00.



A few members decided to carry on with their next programme in Sai Kung town. However, most of us took the bus and arrived back in Central before 5:00 pm (still in time for our Christmas shopping!!)

*Written by Mak Wei Ming*

*Photos taken by Patricia Mak*