

Lotus Flowers in Cambodia

In February this year (2020) we travelled in SE Asia where we enjoyed the beautiful weather, immersed ourselves in the culture, visited many spectacular temples and enjoyed the hospitality of the local people.



During our trip we visited Cambodia where the tour took us to the urban and rural areas. We had many interesting experiences but, for me, the sight of the magnificent Lotus Flowers was something very special.

We travelled to Thailand, Laos and Cambodia but we saw most Lotus Flowers growing in ponds, lakes, ditches and canals in Cambodia.

The Lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*) plant is an aquatic perennial, native to Asia.

The plant has its roots firmly sited in muddy water and it sends out long stems, which contain air spaces to maintain the buoyancy, to which their leaves are attached. Some of the leaves, and all of the Lotus

Flowers, are always raised above the water surface. The fragrant and beautiful, generally pink or white, Lotus Flower opens in the morning and closes late afternoon.

The Lotus Flower symbolises enlightenment because it rises and blooms above the murk.

The pink Lotus is the national Flower of India and it represents beauty, grace, knowledge, richness, serenity, purity and majesty.

The flower is not only beautiful, the Lotus Flower is considered sacred and it has symbolic meaning in Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

The Lotus seeds can be eaten and often form part of a salad and there is medicinal value in the petals, roots and stamens.

Nucifera means having hard fruit.

The Lotus fruits comprise of a conical pod with holes where the seeds are found. When the seeds are ripe, they become loose in the pod which then tips down towards the water, and the seeds are released.

The dried Lotus seed pod is used extensively in floral art.

Samatoa Farm, near Siam Reap, is a large lake where Lotus Flowers are farmed. Many of the flowers are used to produce eco-friendly fabric.





In the hotels, fresh Lotus Flowers were used to decorate many areas, such as the bedrooms, on the dining tables, in the Massage rooms and at the reception to name just a few.

Some of the Lotus Flowers displayed were left in their natural closed shape but often the petals of the Lotus Flowers were manipulated to form stunning geometric designs which look incredibly sculptural and beautiful.

A hotel florist kindly attempted to teach me the art of manipulating the flowers but it was a skilled job and I struggled to achieve any acceptable shape in my 10 minute lesson! I will however never forget the experience.

To conclude:

I fell completely head over heels with the Lotus Plant and in particular, the most spectacular Lotus Flower.

Joanna Sears

