

Happiness Comes from Within

The happiest people I ever knew were the people I met in the early 70's while stationed in Thailand during the Vietnam War. Most of the Thai people were dirt poor and lived in small, cramped apartments in a hot, humid climate with no air conditioning. When you walked down the damp, dingy streets, you were greeted with huge smiles everywhere you went. The rice paddies and tropical fauna held no attraction at all for me, but the Thai people thought they lived in the most beautiful place on Earth.

I, myself, could hardly wait to get out of Thailand and get back to the 'States. During my 2-year stay, I continually daydreamed about living back in the 'States again, especially in some beautiful, forested area with a temperate climate and many rivers and lakes. To me, Thailand was an ugly, dirty place, and I had a difficult time understanding why the Thai people were so happy all the time.

After returning to the 'States, I quickly moved to a place near the rivers and lakes and forests similar to what I had envisioned while in Thailand. For a while, life was great. Eventually, after settling into marriage and a career, life got a little bumpier and I found myself overwhelmed much of the time by financial pressures, and the various trials and tribulations that we all face in life, no matter where we live. During the times of greatest stress, I wished that I had opted for a simpler, less expensive lifestyle. I often thought of those happy Thai people in Thailand who were poor in material goods, but rich in so many other ways.

Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so it is with happiness. It may be found in almost any circumstance. If the external circumstances of your life are making you unhappy, look within for the help you need.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7