



# Welcome to Our World.(3)

**Hello again ! Happy Christmas to all of you. I expect that at this time of year you are getting ready for Christmas. It might surprise you to know that here in Thailand Christmas is celebrated too.**

**Although a predominantly Buddhist country, The Thai people celebrate**

**festivals from around the world. Just yesterday I watched them begin to dismantle the many displays erected to celebrate the 85th Birthday of their revered King. No sooner had this been done, that they started to put up Christmas decorations, Christmas Trees, Christmas Lights and even, believe it or not Snowmen. It is so bizarre to see a snowman in a country which never sees snow,**

**except on the highest Northern Peaks. Still ! As we Farangs, which is what Thai people call foreigners, say : TIT or ' This is Thailand'. A wonderfully friendly land visited by millions of people each year, but understood only by a few.**

**Of course in Italy the weather is now getting cold. Here too the Winter has arrived. Only yesterday I met a Thai Friend who told me that I must wear a jacket or else I would catch a cold. He was dressed in a padded jacket and was wearing gloves too. The temperature here is twenty seven degrees. To me it was the perfect Summer Day, but to him it was Winter.**

**That is why the months between**

**November and January are the high season . Many of our friends from all over the Western World are now starting to return and we so look forward to spending time with them. Who are these people who come back year after year. They are mainly those who enjoy an alternative lifestyle. Ah! Weird Aging Hippies, you might think. Not at all. These are people who in the main enjoy the benefits of good health and are blessed with an independent mind. Living away from cold Winters has a definite health advantage. There are numerous other advantages too, but in this episode I will deal primarily with the health benefits.**

**In many countries of Europe the Public Health Services leave a lot to be desired , and for many the cost of Private Health Insurance is prohibitive. The Thai Government encourages Medical Tourism; so people come from the Middle East and America and indeed from Europe, purely to avail of the very high quality Medical and Dental care available here. Many Private Hospitals here are Word**





Standard ISO Certified, and only last month I observed an International Certification team at work here, asking some rather tricky questions of the Doctors and Staff at my local hospital. It seems that the answers given were the correct ones, as the ISO Certification is still in place.

In many countries, it is not just the cost of treatment, but the inconvenience and long waiting times which anger people. Here it is possible to walk in off the street, without an appointment and be seen almost immediately by a Medical or

Dental Consultant of your choice. Facilities are all ultra modern and amazingly cheap. Usually about one third of the European average cost.

Of course very few people realise this and think of Thailand as a Third World Country.

A very good friend of mine from America, tired of friends and family asking incredulously:

"Do you really go to the *Dentist in Thailand* ?" concocted the following fictitious story to shut them up.



"Oh yes ! I was, there just last month. We had to drive about ten kilometers over an unmade road to the village where the dentist lived. It was a terrible journey and took over an hour to get there. When we arrived I had to wait in the Sun for another hour until it was my turn and then I was led into a jungle clearing. At the centre of this clearing was a large wooden chair where it was indicated to me that I should sit. After another fifteen minutes in the boiling sun the Dentist arrived to treat me. The only word of English he understood was "pain" and he proceeded to poke around in my mouth with a pointed stick, which seemed to be his only

instruments".

At this stage everybody realised that they were being fooled and my friend could then tell them just how really good the services are here.

It is quite common for tourists to combine expensive medical or dental procedures with a long holiday of maybe a month or two. This can often mean that the cost of the holiday and the treatment or treatments can be less than the cost of an



equivalent treatment at home and with none of the associated waiting times . This because the cost of accommodation can be very low indeed. In some areas of Thailand a decent ensuite room in a guesthouse can cost as little as fifteen Euro per night room rate, or even cheaper if booked on a monthly basis. This of course is about one third of the equivalent European rate. Food too is of good quality, Thai Cuisine being world famous. As in every other country Italian Restaurants abound and a good meal for two people can be had there for less than fifteen Euro including wine.



Now , having read all this ,maybe those dental crowns you have been saving for look a more attractive proposition , or even the cosmetic,surgery that you would love to have but cannot afford.

However, I do not write only about cheap healthcare, or food or even accommodation.

Yes! These are all elements of traveling to Asia, but that is not the reason Ann and I travel.

We travel out of a spirit of adventure.

It is easy, as I wrote in a previous episode, to sit at home and pile logs on the fire, or buy expensive heating oil, whilst reading this article jealously. Thinking that it must be lovely to do something different. Well ! If that is what you enjoy doing, no problem. You can however, if you so wish, do what we have done and change your life; so easily! If you are a single traveler, then you have only to consult yourself; if married or in a relationship, then consult your partner and plan the changes that suit you best, Whether it is a month in the sun in a single country, or indeed six months around several, it matters not. If you are retired it will break the monotony of doing the same things day after day. If you have not yet reached retirement and are unhappy doing whatever it is you do, this could be an opportunity. Remember, *opportunities come to everyone, but not everyone recognises them*; even those that do are very often afraid to grasp them. So be brave and change your life! if you are unhappy with your present lifestyle.