



SAAMDU CHETRI

"BHUTAN'S HAPPINESS GURU"

is coming to Manila

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Arriving in the remote kingdom of Bhutan is spiritually uplifting as visitors are welcomed by ancient monasteries, fluttering prayer flags, and its staggering natural beauty. Less than 40 years ago, Bhutan opened its borders for the first time and gained mythical status as a "real-life Shangri-La". This is largely for its determined and methodical pursuit of the most elusive of concepts – "national happiness". The Kingdom of Bhutan, is a landlocked country in South Asia at the eastern end of the Himalayas. It is located between the sub-tropic, south to Alpine in the north, and is over 24,000 feet above sea level. In this landlocked, mountainous and sometimes harsh land...the pursuit of happiness has not been easy but with perseverance, creativity, respect for Nature and Humanity ...Bhutan has prevailed and leads the world in the pursuit of Gross National Happiness. (GNH)

In the 1970s, the king of Bhutan announced that the happiness of the population was more important than the Gross Domestic Product. Saamdu Chetri was charged with overseeing Bhutan's happiness - despite his life with its share of challenges.

Born in a cowshed in the remote rural area of the District of Dagana in Bhutan on 15 Oct. 1957. By the age of 14, Saamdu Chetri left school compelled by duty towards his brothers and sisters who had left home to help his parents. His day on the farm began at 4:00AM when he would walk a kilometer to fetch water, after which he would feed the ox and begin to plough.

Despite many personal challenges and grief, today Dr. Chetri always has a smile on his face. A self-described naturally happy person, he never dreamt he would end up as the man responsible for Bhutan's happiness center. He explained how Bhutan's nationwide happiness surveys are used to improve people's lives as the message of happiness is shared by him on the world stage in many countries and their leaders of note.

Dr. Saamdu Chetri is the Executive Director of the GNH Center in Bhutan and holds a PhD in Commerce, Master in Commerce and Post-Graduation Certificate in HRM. Working closely with many renowned firms, he carries 18 years of experience in socio-economic development. Dr. Chetri has given talks on GNH at universities in London, Copenhagen, Zurich, Bengal, Australia and the US. He is also talks to Consulting Firms in Switzerland and Singapore among others.

As a member of a number of development programs in and outside Bhutan, Dr. Chetri has written over 60 reports and 5 annual programs. With his experiences and expertise ranging from rural development, microfinance, to management of projects and administration, Dr. Chetri has authored two books and has also contributed to the writing of the first book on Gross National Happiness.

In 2006, based on a global survey, Business Week rated Bhutan the happiest country in Asia and the eighth-happiest in the world. For the past three decades, this belief that wellbeing should take preference over material growth has remained a global oddity. Now, in a world beset by collapsing financial systems, gross inequity and wide-scale environmental destruction, this tiny Buddhist state's approach is attracting a lot of interest. We can all use this and pave the road to a more hopeful world.

For a man charged with heading Bhutan's happiness center, it is not hard to see why Saamdu Chetri is the best candidate to promote the message of happiness. Proud of his humble beginnings that allowed him to overcome much suffering early in his life... he shares the simplest messages on the road to happiness.



Bhutan

- The Kingdom of Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia at the eastern end of the Himalayas.
- It is some 24,000 feet above sea level.
- It is a carbon negative country.
- And it has prevailed and continues to lead the world in the pursuit of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

