

FRIENDSHIP NEWSLETTER

For Thai English Students

Songkhran through the eyes of a Foreigner

In Thailand you have a very unique way of celebrating your New Year! Does any other country in the world celebrate with a nation-wide water fight? People all around the world would be very upset if someone they did not even know, threw a bowl of water on them.

I will never forget the first time I experienced Songkhran! I had lived in Thailand only a few months. On one of the water fight days, I traveled by bus across Bangkok for an appointment with my boss. He wanted to talk to me about where I would live after my first year of Thai language study. I was very surprised when people threw buckets of water into the bus at the bus stops. When I got off the bus, I was a bit wet for my important appointment.



Later that day as I walked down the lane towards my apartment, two small children came running excitedly towards me. They carried a bowl of water out in front of them as they ran! I was sure I was going to get all wet. When they came close, I held out my hands in front of me to protect myself from getting wet. With the few Thai words that I knew, I asked them not to throw water on me! I will never forget what happened next.



The two little Thai children did not throw water on me. Instead they gently poured the water over my hands. I thought I was going to get all wet, but I was surprised by their kindness and respect for me, a person they did not even know!

So that first year in Thailand, I experienced *all* of the Songkhran festival. I got wet because people threw water into my bus. And two little Thai children kindly blessed me! In my mind, I can still see them running towards me and remember feeling so blessed by their kindness!



Questions:

1. What does the word “unique” mean?
2. Songkhran is like a “nation-wide water fight!” What does this mean?
3. How did these Thai children show respect?
4. Tell about one of your Songkhran experiences.
5. Tell about an experience where someone was kind to you! Who was kind and how did that make you feel?

By Arlene Sorenson

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