**Survey: top 3 factors to happiness**

A survey conducted by Peking University indicated that in the eyes of the Chinese people, psychological and physical health, harmonious family and stable marriage (or be in love) are the top three factors to happiness.

The survey, conducted by the Women's Studies Center of Peking University, was conducted among 4,175 people via internet or printed questionnaires and the results was released at the ongoing 3rd Asia Women's Forum, which opened in Hong Kong on Monday.

The survey indicated that 26.7 percent of people listed good health as the most important factor to happiness, harmonious family 23.0 percent and stable marriage (be in love) 19.1 percent while they chose the factors to happiness. A total of 80.2 percent interviewees said they were satisfied with their life quality. According to the survey, people with higher education, higher incomes and stable marriage appeared to experience more happiness.

The survey also indicated that good housing conditions, social security system, satisfactory to work also positively influence the degree of happiness. It found that among people feeling vary happy, 34.5 percent and 43.1 percent of interviewees described their sleeping quality as "very good" and "good" respectively, whereas among people saying they were not happy, 40.6 percent and 18.8 percent people said their sleeping quality were "normal" or "bad".

In addition, appetite and quality of sexual life were also believed to be closely linked with degree of happiness, the survey said. The two-day forum is jointly sponsored by Women's Studies Center of Peking University, Asian Women Development Forum, Hong Kong Baptist University and Hong Kong International Women's Association.

**Concepts of happiness**

How are you feeling today? Our emotions can vary considerably depending on many factors, including our health, wealth, relationships and where we live. But sometimes we need to take a step back and think about what happiness really means and how we can find it.

Maybe we should take a leaf out of Finland's book – last year the UN's World Happiness Report found the country to be the happiest place on Earth. The report looked at 'subjective well-being'. That's how happy people feel they are and why - based on factors such as, economic strength, social support, life expectancy, freedom of choice, generosity, and perceived corruption.

This is just one way of measuring happiness. Research has also suggested that while personal feelings of pleasure are the accepted definition of happiness in Western cultures, East Asian cultures tend to see happiness as social harmony, and in some parts of Africa and India it's more about shared experiences and family.

Author and journalist Helen Russell has been looking at the positive characteristics of a country's population to see what makes them happy and found Japan to be one of the most content. She told the BBC that this was due to their concept of wabi-sabi – "this traditional Japanese concept around celebrating imperfection… it's this idea that there is a beauty in ageing, it's to be celebrated rather than trying to disguise it." So, basically, we should be happy with who we are and rejoice in our faults and individuality. That's something to put a smile on our faces!

But if you're feeling down in the dumps because your home country doesn't have a happiness concept to follow, consider some self-help ideas that the BBC programme Hacking Happiness has been looking into. These include being virtuous, finding something to be passionate about, enjoying the here and now and being altruistic – helping others.

However, our pursuit of happiness could make us miserable as we try to meet society’s expectations and goals, making us anxious and stressed. Also, having too little experience of negative emotions can make us less adept at facing new challenges.