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## THAILAND'S NEW AGE SCRIBE

**Duangthip Arora has made an extensive study of Ayurveda and other holistic disciplines and put them in a book for new mothers and the whole family**

Writer: Erin Billie Hughes

Published: 19/07/2009 at 12:00 AM

Newspaper section: [Brunch](#)

Mothers in the city may be enamoured of access to modern technology and the ease of urban life, but they may be trading their health and that of their children for these conveniences. Duangthip Arora, or "Dimple", seeks to reconnect people with a more natural, holistic way of living. Her passion becomes clear when she talks animatedly about her new book, *A New Age Manual for the New Mother*.



The book gives new mothers advice on caring for children and themselves, with an emphasis on the Ayurvedic teachings Arora is well versed in. The book details common foods and herbs that can benefit the entire family and includes a glossary of herbs. Going beyond providing holistic advice for mothers, the book offers information that anyone can use to incorporate Ayurvedic knowledge in their lives. The author asserted that "this is a health care book for practically anyone", while noting that a male client from her workshop bought it for information to help with his health goals.

Ms Duangthip's interest in New Age health care started long before she had children. Introduced to reflexology by her sister, she then took intensive courses in Ayurveda in India.

She says it started more as a hobby as she was more interested in becoming a businesswoman at the time. Still, her interest in the practical application of the subjects she learned was apparent. "I was always practising at home on my family and friends," said Ms Duangthip.

Similarly, while she had her start in writing early on, she never thought she would make a career of it.

"I have my diary and I used to write in my journal. I have my collection of poems, but it never struck me that I could actually be a writer." It was having children that inspired her to pen the book.

In some ways, she said, her education and work experience prepared her for Ayurvedic studies. Educated in Bangkok, India and London, this diversity gave her a more global mindset and she wants her information to be passed on to a global audience.

Before her children were born she worked at the Asian Institute of Gemological Science and at Swarovski Crystal and Jewellery in Bangkok. The free time she had between the chores of motherhood allowed her to write, and she wanted to share the knowledge that was helpful in raising her own children.

"I couldn't find a one-stop manual like this. You had to go to different books - I couldn't find a book like this anywhere," she said. "I think the knowledge should be made public."

Remarking that the average mother doesn't want to read the more esoteric New Age literature, she feels her book is more conversational. It includes anecdotes on traditional Indian cures and traditions.

Her own children responded well to the herbal remedies she gave them. "Children are so vulnerable and their bodies are so receptive to herbs. You don't have to give them paracetamol."

For example, mint or lemongrass can be used to alleviate symptoms of a cold and save a trip to the pharmacy. An interview in *Guru* magazine, put out by the Bangkok Post, in which she espoused the virtues of natural therapy, has led some to call her the "Mistress of Herbs".

Ms Duangthip hopes that her work will benefit those around her. "The reason I am passionate about this book is because I think it is a very good mechanism to uplift mothers." This is why she imparts her knowledge at workshops in Bangkok.

"When your vessel is full it just overflows. I just felt like sharing," said Ms Duangthip.

Some proceeds of the book will also go to assist financially challenged women whom the author is acquainted with.

When asked about the future, she said she hopes she can continue to write. Her plans include a version of the book geared toward teenagers and eventually another for menopausal women.

As much as she is enthusiastic about her work, she still thinks a mother's intuition is the best way to nurture children, and she gives this advice to new mothers.

"Listen to your instincts. Don't raise your child by the book. You have to connect with your child through the heart, understand your child and know that your child is different from every other child."

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