

BOOK REVIEW: Siam Araya Manifesto

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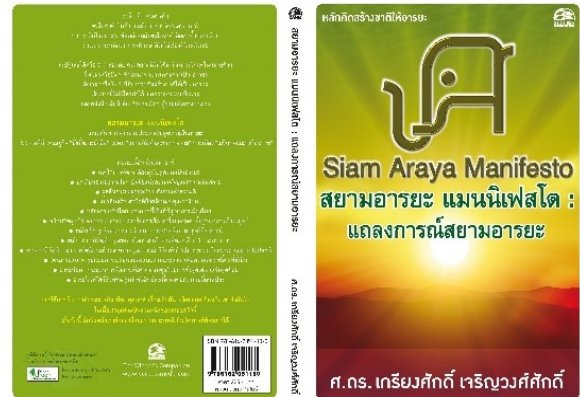
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Preface

"Siam Araya Manifesto" not only captivates readers but also serves as inspiration for an entire nation. Kriengsak Chareonwongsak's "Siam Araya Manifesto" stands out as one such masterpiece, envisioning a path toward comprehensive prosperity that guides Thailand to a future marked by both affluence and longevity. As I delved into its pages, the author's profound ideas struck a chord, presenting a compelling narrative.

At the heart of the "Siam Araya Manifesto" lies the concept of Siam Araya, symbolizing the nation's evolution towards prosperity, encapsulating material wealth, emotional well-being, and virtuous self. Prof Kriengsak meticulously explores avenues for arayalization, spanning governmental systems, leadership approaches, and public policies. The narrative emphasizes the significance of fostering a Pluralistic Society, creating an environment where diverse perspectives can flourish harmoniously.

Divided into four key areas, the first section delves into conceptual frameworks. Among these, the Unified Pluralistic Society, Araya Philosophy for Building Exemplary Individuals, Araya Social Philosophy for a sustainable and peaceful society, Arayacracy, and Seven Araya Waves take center stage.

The Unified Pluralistic Society envisions a space where diverse groups peacefully coexist, respecting individual freedoms. Rejecting extremes, the author advocates for a compassionate society where each group considers the interests of the whole. This vision is presented not just as a theoretical construct but as a practical necessity to prevent conflicts, foster national development, and redirect focus from wars to collective prosperity.

Araya's Philosophy for Building Exemplary Individuals comprises three pillars: Goodness, Beauty, and Truth. Goodness integrates moral principles and physical/emotional well-being, proposing government initiatives to encourage virtuous behavior, establish social safety nets, and promote equality. Beauty becomes a policy advocating for arts, music, and visual aesthetics to enhance national happiness. Truth is pursued through critical thinking, science-based investigations, and the promotion of diverse knowledge.

Araya's Social Philosophy for building a sustainable and peaceful society underscores the importance of community support in human survival. Starting with the family unit and extending to broader social structures, the philosophy hinges on principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Liberty, an inherent human right, is underscored with historical examples, emphasizing freedom within a democratic society. Araya Freedom stresses the need for boundaries to ensure responsible freedom. Equality critiques policies lacking efficiency, defining Araya Equality as providing optimal benefits based on individual needs rather than blindly distributing resources equally. Araya Fraternity becomes the foundation for a harmonious society, emphasizing a shared kinship that extends care and support to all members.

Arayacracy, a form of democracy rooted in Dharmacracy, incorporates principles of virtue, righteousness, and justice. The integration of Dharmacracy into the democratic system

is deemed imperative to promote justice, equity, and morality, presenting Arayacracy as a viable pathway to address political challenges and corruption in Thailand.

The concept of seven Araya waves, each representing a distinct era of societal development, begins with the Zero Araya Wave, characterized by nomadic societies. The waves progress through agricultural, industrial, and information societies. The author emphasizes the importance of early adoption to ensure societal prosperity. The focus shifts to Thailand's current state, experiencing an overlap of waves and a power struggle between different economic forces. Urging a shift towards the Knowledge Society, the author emphasizes the need for innovation and a long-term vision. The goal is for Thailand to be in the last or seventh wave, a future Virtuous Society, where virtue becomes the driving force. The author calls for virtuous leadership and a transition through the Knowledge and Wisdom waves to reach this utopian model.

The second section offers historical overviews of the rise and fall of civilizations. Identifying factors contributing to the rise (food security, a strong military, thriving economies, progress in knowledge and technology, and virtuous governance) and those leading to the fall (Economic Decline, lack of good governance, Societal Problems, Security Challenges, and Lack of Knowledge and innovation), the manifesto directs Thailand to focus on these factors to move towards the Siam Araya Vision.

The third part outlines a framework for arayalization, positioning it as the fourth political revolution in Thailand. Arayalization, with its phases of Revitalization, Optimization, and Dhammalization, seeks to comprehensively address Thailand's challenges and propel the nation toward sustainable prosperity. The critical concept of the Tri-Araya State involves the Araya People, the Araya System, and the Araya Context. Araya People necessitate a shift towards individuals embodying virtuous principles, while Araya System focuses on justice and upholding Araya freedom, equality, and fraternity within the societal system. This demands an efficient and flexible system capable of adapting to changing environments. Araya Context refers to the surrounding environment supporting and sustaining changes introduced by the transformation, acknowledging the influences of context on the success of reformation and the need for alignment with Araya principles.

The last part introduces the Araya World-Life View, perceiving the world and lives through the Araya Philosophy of Self (goodness, beauty, truth) and the Araya Philosophy of Society (liberty, equality, fraternity). This view emphasizes stewardship of the planet and its resources, advocating for responsible utilization, preservation, and technologization. The

Araya world-life view is positioned as a guiding mindset influencing decisions, occupations, thought processes, and all aspects of life within the path of the Siam Araya vision.

What sets "Siam Araya Manifesto" apart is its ability to provide not only visionary concepts but also actionable examples. Prof Kriengsak's ideas transcend theory, accompanied by practical steps for implementation. This practicality enhances the book's value, particularly for individuals seeking to make a tangible difference in Thailand. However, it's important to acknowledge that some may criticize the book as being overly idealistic and positive. While this criticism is valid, it's essential to recognize that this work is not intended as an academic title. Rather, it serves as a collection of influential opinions, insights, and calls to action. It is precisely this positivity and influence that make "Siam Araya Manifesto" a powerful catalyst for change.

In conclusion, the "Siam Araya Manifesto" by Kriengsak Chareonwongsak is a must-read for anyone passionate about the future of Thailand. It offers a vision of comprehensive prosperity and outlines the steps needed to achieve it. While some may find the book overly idealistic, its impact and influence cannot be denied. It is a work that instills hope and inspiration, and its ideas have the potential to shape a better Thailand for generations to come.

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