

# Identity and Theological Discourse of Christian Women in Thailand: A Case Study of Kamol Arayaprateep

อัตลักษณ์และวาทกรรมทางเทววิทยาของสตรีคริสเตียน  
ในประเทศไทย: กรณีศึกษาสารุคุณ ดร.กมล อารยะประทีป

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## บทคัดย่อ

บทความชิ้นนี้มุ่งเสนอข้อมูลเป็นครั้งแรกเกี่ยวกับอัตลักษณ์และวาทกรรมทางเทววิทยาของสารุคุณ ดร.กมล อารยะประทีป แห่งคริสตจักรของพระคริสต์แห่งประเทศไทย ดร.กมล อารยะประทีป เป็นที่รู้จักในชุมชนชาวคริสเตียนทั้งในและนอกประเทศไทยในฐานะที่เป็นนักเทววิทยาสตรีคนแรกของไทย หากแต่ยังไม่ค่อยให้ความสนใจต่อวาทกรรมทางเทววิทยาของเธอเท่าใดนัก บทความชิ้นนี้ศึกษาชีวประวัติโดยการสัมภาษณ์นักเทววิทยาสตรีในโรงเรียนสอนศาสนาในเชียงใหม่และกรุงเทพฯ และวิเคราะห์ประเด็นหลัก ตลอดจนใจความสำคัญของวาทกรรมทางเทววิทยาจากบทความสำคัญของเธอทั้งในภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทย ผู้เขียนสรุปว่าวาทกรรมของสารุคุณกมล มีที่มาจากความปรารถนาอย่างแรงกล้าของเธอในการที่จะเป็น “มนุษย์ที่แท้” ด้วยการเปลี่ยนตัวเองให้เป็นพระเยซูคริสต์ ซึ่งเกิดจากประสบการณ์การเปลี่ยนศาสนาของเธอเอง ในแง่นี้ หัวใจหลักของงานของเธอคือการส่งเสริมสัมพันธภาพของศาสนาอย่างเป็นทางการ เพื่อสร้างความสัมพันธ์ที่มีฐานจากความศรัทธาระหว่างหญิงคริสเตียนชาวเอเชีย และเพื่อรับใช้พระเจ้า จนกว่าความซบถาภาพจะมาเยือนด้วยความมั่นใจและเบิกบานใจ

**คำสำคัญ:** สตรีคริสเตียนชาวไทย, วาทกรรมทางเทววิทยา, สัมพันธภาพทางศาสนา

## **Abstract**

This paper aims to propound the first comprehensive resource about the identity and theological discourse of Reverend Dr.Kamol Arayaprateep of the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). Arayaprateep is well known in Christian communities both inside and outside Thailand as the first Thai woman Biblical theologian. However, little attention has been given to her theological discourse itself. This paper investigates her life history by conducting interviews with women theologians at theological seminaries in Chiang Mai and in Bangkok. This paper also examines major concerns and themes of her theological discourses by reviewing her major papers in English and in Thai. The author concludes that her discourse was based on her great longing to be “truly human” by converting to Jesus Christ himself which had emerged from her own experience of conversion. Thus, the major concerns were to promote universal “ecumenism,” to establish faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women, and to continue to serve God until her senescence with confidence and enjoyment.

**Keywords:** Christian women, Theological discourse, Ecumenism

## Introduction

At present, 33 percent of the world population believes in Christianity. This fact indicates that Christianity is still one of the most influential religions in the world. However, little attention has been given to the fact that more than 50 percent of Christian population lives in non-western countries including Asia. Besides, women outnumber men in church attendance in every major Christian denomination. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that Christianity is no longer the religion of *westerners*. As a result, any academic Christian studies, which ignore *non-western* (including Asian) women will fail to grasp the present situation appropriately and accurately. *Asian women's theologies*, an emerging movement since the late 1970s, is a relatively new attempt of non-western Christian women. According to Kwok Puilan's *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology* (2000), Asian Christian women have organized theological networks, convened ecumenical conferences, and begun to publish books and journals. They have been doing so since the late 1970s in their bid to contribute to feminist theologies emerging from the Third World. However, Kwok also pointed out that the majority of women in Asia have the shared experience of emerging from a long history of colonialism, except for women in Thailand and in Japan<sup>1</sup>. In fact, Thailand is the only country that had preserved her independence during the Second World War while Japan had a history of domination and invasion. In both countries, Christians remain a small minority at almost the same level (less than 1 percent of its population). These might be the reasons why Thai and Japanese women's theologies had not been fully investigated for almost 35 years. Thus the author, a Japanese fourth-generation Christian woman, had become interested in women's theologies in these two countries. As such, the author has been conducting a research project on four representative women theologians in Thailand in order to consider the possibilities of Asian Christian women's contribution to church and society.

The purpose of this paper is to propound the first comprehensive resource about Reverend Dr. Kamol Arayaprteep's life history and theological discourse for further study. Arayaprteep (1925-2008) is the first Thai theologian who received a Ph.D. in the Old Testament (Biblical theology), and one of the first Thai women pastors of the Church of Christ in Thailand<sup>2</sup> (CCT) who received ordination in the 1960s. She had taught at the Thailand Theological Seminary (TTS) in Chiang Mai, McGilvary College of Divinity of Payap University (MCD) and at the Bangkok Institute of Theology (BIT). She had also worked for the Faith and Order committee of the World Council of Churches. She is undoubtedly well known in the Christian community inside Thailand, especially as the author of the most trusted textbook of the Old Testament, as well as outside, such as ecumenical movements since the 1970s. However, no studies have ever been attempted to examine her life history and theological discourse despite various previous attempts of Asian women theological movements since the late 1970s.

## Materials and Methods

I am guided most generally by the interdisciplinary methods including story-telling, social analysis, and reinterpretation of the Bible from Asian Christian women's points of view. The latter refers to the Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), which has suggested for *Asian women's theologies* in the 1980s. Applying these methods to my research project, I firstly seek to retrieve her bibliographic information both in English and in Thai. I have chosen to employ preceding studies in Protestant theology and church history in Thailand such as *Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*<sup>3</sup> and the date base of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) to furnish a bibliography of her major papers, reports, articles, and essays as

primary documents. Secondly, I have conducted interview with Reverend Dr. Chuleepran Srisoontorn of the MCD in order to inquire about Arayaprateep's life history and theological discourse in Chiang Mai after I have collected her English documents and perused them. Thirdly, I have conducted another interview with a theological educator at the BIT, Aj.Nantiya Petchgate<sup>4</sup>, so as to investigate Arayaprateep's life history and theological discourse in Bangkok and purveyed her Thai papers such as *Khao Christajak (Church News)* of the CCT as supplementary documents<sup>5</sup>. Fourthly, I read them intensively and analyzed some characteristics of her theological discourse.

As far as the purpose of this paper is concerned, it is not necessary to discuss all the topics of the above-listed articles in detail. The following results of my research is as followed: Arayaprateep's theological discourse was based on a great longing to be or for being a *truly man* which led her to the commitment to *ecumenism*. In her discourse, seeking ways to be and keep being a *truly man* is the essential theme for all the people and for herself as well. In addition to this, establishing equality between men and women, a *single Church* and transnational faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women were all important themes derived from her commitment to ecumenism. For these reasons, she lived as a Christian who continued to work until her later years and encouraged elderly people to live meaningfully.

### ***Life History***

It is important to outline her life history that the author has obtained through interviews before examining the major concerns in her theological discourse. It is said that Arayaprateep have not shared much about herself to others. She was born in Bangkok. After her parents passed away, she stayed with her uncle through whom she contracted tuberculosis and was abandoned at the McCormick Hospital in Chiang Mai because it was a

discriminated disease. She was introduced to the Bible by a patient who was a Christian woman from the Southern part of Thailand. After suffering from the physical pain, discrimination and loneliness, she believed that she was healed by *prayer and faith*. She was given an opportunity to receive education by Reverend Dr.E. John Hamlin, an American Presbyterian missionary. After studying at the TTS (1956-1959) in Chiang Mai, Philippines Christian College (1961-1962), Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines (1962-1965), she was given a chance to go to the United States for further study. Arayaprateep received a M.Th (Biblical Theology) from McCormick Theological Seminary in 1970 and a Ph.D. from Seabury Western Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1974. She then became an ordained pastor of the CCT. She showed her leadership mainly in theological education at the TTS and ecumenism at the CCT and at the WCC. After moving from the TTS to the BIT in her later years, she was invited to the meeting of the Department of Religious Affairs of Thai government. There, she wrote an article about Christianity for the Royal Institute Dictionary as a representative of Christian community. She passed away as the result of traffic accident in September 2008. In the obituary column of the newsletter of the CCT, *Echoes*, Arayapartee’s life-long service was praised as “many-faced ministry.”<sup>6</sup>

### ***A Great Longing to be a Truly Man***

Let us begin with “The Covenant: An Effective Tool in Bible Study” published in *the South East Asian Journal of Theology* (SEAJT) in 1977, which is based on her master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation written in Chicago. In this paper, taking 2 Kings 17: 24-41 for example, she explained that Israel’s *fear* of Yahweh refers to the Initiative of God and the understanding of *the fear* in a new way would help us to improve our attitude toward God and the

relationship between God and people. It is apparent that a great longing to be a *truly man* is the core message of her theological reflections. This can be seen when she clearly declared that “we will be truly man, man that has been created according to God’s own image when we confess Him with absolute obedience, worship Him and remain faithful to Him, as our God, our King, and our suzerain.”<sup>7</sup> She observed that Jesus gave us two commandments that summarized the Ten Commandments in the Old Testaments by taking Jeremiah 31: 31-24 and Synoptic Gospels as examples. In especial, she paid attention to a new expression in Jeremiah 31: 33, “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and *write it in their hearts*; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”<sup>8</sup> Why does God *write it in their hearts* in the New Covenant despite having inscribed the Ten Commandments in the Old Covenant on stone tablets? Arayaprteep answered this question by explaining that God moved the Initiative, which was destroyed with the Kingdom of Israel, from the Ark of the Covenant to people’s hearts, in order to fulfill the Word, “I will be their God, and they shall be My people (Ezekiel, 37: 27).” Therefore all the people, “from the least of them to the greatest of them (Jeremiah, 31: 34),” shall know God in the New Covenant. This Covenant has already been made between God and people and yet, we are still trying to be kings over ourselves, the world, others, and “we never allow our hearts to be His throne.”<sup>9</sup> In her understanding, people can be *truly men* only when we live in the world that “God is God and man is man.”<sup>10</sup> Her great longing to be a *truly man* would be connected to her later confidence in ecumenism.

### ***Women Created in the Image of God***

In 1987, Arayaprateep attended a conference of the Asian Women's Resource Centre for Culture and Theology (AWRC), which was one of the institutional bases of Asian women's theological movement, in Singapore and gave a presentation on Christology. Making a link to her great longing to be *truly man*, she claimed that men and women are both created in God's Image. Though she spelt it as "*truly man*" in the previous paper, we understand that this term does not mean *truly males* when she clearly insisted "God wants all people to understand that woman is created in the image of God, created equal to man."<sup>11</sup> She also pointed out that women had a vital part in the life of Jesus Christ and both women and men were in the group of his disciples in this paper. She wrote; "we women are always very grateful to Jesus the Christ. It is because of him that we can see God's grace for women,"<sup>12</sup> because God liberated women from their low status and gave high honor through Jesus Christ. From her words at the end of this paper, "we will live our lives to respond to the steadfast love of Christ, with our loyalty and with our love offered to Christ with all our heart,"<sup>13</sup> we can understand that faith-based relationship, solidarity or global sisterhood among Christian women was the important theme as well as in her journey to be a truly man. However, what kind of Christian women can really participate in the transnational faith-based relationship? This question will be raised in the next part.

### ***Trip to China***

In 1991, Arayaprateep contributed reflections on her trip to China to *Asia Journal of Theology* and to the only journal of Asian women's theology, *In God's Image*. Let us focus on "May the Lord's Church Be One: Reflection on the Trip to China" which appeared in the latter journal. From this title, we can observe that she understood ecumenism in the literal meaning that seeks

for a *single Church*, a *greater Christian unity*. Twenty Christian women from Asian countries travelled to China with the aims to dialogue with the theologically trained women there as well as to establish a network to work for women in their own countries afterward.<sup>14</sup> Giving her impressions on China, Arayaprteep said, “we saw God’s love for China and God’s work in China everywhere that we went.”<sup>15</sup> Although she could not ascertain whether the movement in China and Thailand had the same implication or not<sup>16</sup>, she basically had a high opinion of the Three Self Movement in China. In fact, she praised them for making “Christianity a religion of the people in that country and not a foreign religion.”<sup>17</sup> Though she briefly referred to many years of suffering of the churches in the period of the Cultural Revolution, she said that “(after the Cultural Revolution) all the churches in China have become one. There are no more denominations. This is *very biblical*.”<sup>18</sup> When a Chinese church leader said that denominations were not what they created but were introduced to China by different missionaries of various missions, she sympathized with them and affirmed the churches in China for standing “firm on their own feet”<sup>19</sup>. In line with her belief to establish a *single Church*, she prayed for the churches to “repent from divisions before being forced by any external power to be one.”<sup>20</sup> Though she realized that “we saw only what had been arranged for us to see”<sup>21</sup> in this trip, we cannot find any other clues, at least from this paper, to observe how much she recognized the political influence of the Chinese Communist Party on the churches.

Next, we move on to the problem of the transnational faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women, which is another theme of this paper. Arayaprteep said “I believe that the women in China had largely been ‘liberated’ ever before the Communist rule in China.”<sup>22</sup> This came after she had a chance to dialogue with outstanding women, such as professors in the seminaries and universities, church leaders, ordained ministers and pastors,

who were highly educated, proficient in English, and were eager to contribute to church and society. When she was invited to the seminaries and churches, she could observe that the women were receiving ordination and working side by side with men. While she said that “we were informed that today women have the same positions and professions in the government, universities, schools, hospitals that men used to have”,<sup>23</sup> she also recognized that “we chiefly made contacts with highly educated women and had *no opportunity to get in touch with ordinary women*.”<sup>24</sup> What do these sentences suggest? These observations made Arayaprateep fully realized that “it is too early to say that in China women are equal to men”<sup>25</sup> and that the dialogues to establish the faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women were not made among ordinary women. Moreover, she discerned that outstanding and highly-educated Christian women were still subservient to the conservative sexual division of labor without realizing it. This came about when she heard that some women seminary graduates hoped to marry men with higher degrees and were willing to help their husbands to be ordained without seeking their own ordination. Arayaprateep pointed out that this also happened in Thailand as well. At the end of this paper, she encouraged women to “accept their status and equality without inhibition or hesitation”<sup>26</sup> because women were also created in the Image of God.

### ***Confidence in Ecumenism***

We can see Arayaprateep’s strong commitment to ecumenism more clearly in “Conversion: A Universal Need” in which she outlined the Salvation History of Israel from *The Ecumenical Review* in 1992. At the beginning of this paper, she questioned; “why do we so often have this sense of incompleteness, emptiness and inadequacy?”<sup>27</sup> Experiencing this sense of lack is not relevant to one’s economic conditions, educational background,

and human relations. She called this sense *the longing for God* (Psalms, 42: 1-2) and explained that it was “a sign that we are *truly human*.”<sup>28</sup> In her understanding, it was because both men and women were created in God’s image to live with God, receive God’s love and to love God. For regaining true humanity as created in the image of God, we need to return to God. Arayaprateep said with certainty that “Jesus Christ is the only way to return to God”<sup>29</sup> and “God gives Jesus Christ as the answer.”<sup>30</sup> People who live their lives apart from God will rely on their own wisdom and create religions as substitution for God. However, they cannot be satisfied because “these religions do not lead men and women to the Creator.”<sup>31</sup> As mentioned above, her strong belief in Jesus Christ as the only way to the salvation is stated clearly in this paper. According to her, it is noteworthy that “the kingdom which was revealed by Jesus Christ is *not* a religion, nor an inner state of mind nor a personal salvation.”<sup>32</sup> More accurately, for Arayaprateep, the salvation is not just a transient experience of conversion. The phrase *ecumenical conversion* means “the decision by an adherent of one of the world’s non-Christaan religions to accept Jesus Christ, following their hearing of the gospel”<sup>33</sup> and to be *oikoumene*, which is the Greek term translated as *the one church*. She said “conversion to Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for everybody (Philippians, 2: 10-11).”<sup>34</sup> There is no exception, either for those who already have their religions or “even for those who call themselves Christians.”<sup>35</sup> In this paper, Arayaprateep considered religions as substitute of God. On the other hand, she said that “Jesus Christ is not the founder of a religion”<sup>36</sup> and had to be regarded as founder of *a church*. Therefore, to her, Christianity is not a religion. Viewed in this light, conversion can also be explained as converting to Christ himself rather than converting to Christianity.

Her confidence in ecumenism seems to come from her own experience of conversion. Her parents passed away when she was very little. As an

orphan, she developed lung tuberculosis and was sent to the McCormick Hospital in Chiang Mai after being abandoned by her relative. It is said that she was introduced to the Bible by a patient who was a Christian woman from the Southern part of Thailand. After suffering from the physical pain, discrimination and loneliness, she had an experience of conversion and she believed that she was healed by prayer and faith. She had stressed that the conversion to Christ is necessary for all people and there was no exception, even for Christians. Hence, to be truly human through one's conversion and restoration of relationship with God was not a mere temporary event like an initiation. For her, it was a lifelong-dedication from teenage to senescence. In fact, during the author's hearing investigation at the Bangkok Institute of Theology, she was especially interested in "elderly people" in her later years. In her papers written in English until the 1990s, this point was barely mentioned when she visited China at various meeting points and Christian gatherings without pastors. She said that "I learned many things from the retired people and the ways they witness Christ."<sup>37</sup> However, we can take a closer look at her interest in elderly people when we take into account of her papers written in Thai in the 2000s as she approached senescence.

### ***Dignified Elderly Christians***

In "Kristajak tongaan sityaaphibaan (Churches need pastors)"<sup>38</sup> which appeared in *Church News* in 2002, Arayaprateep examined a severe shortage of pastors in the Church of Christ in Thailand.<sup>39</sup> According to her understanding, all the Christians ought to spread the Gospel of God, but the number of graduates of theological seminaries was still scarce, and 40 percent of the Church had no pastors. How can we nurture and train pastors and church leaders? This was the task that we should take on with enthusiasm. One of the attempts for it is to keep inviting people who are interested in studying

theology to theological seminaries every year. While she discussed about the responsibility of theological seminaries, she clearly professed that responding to God's calling to study theology is not limited to a particular gender or age.<sup>40</sup> Taking her experience in teaching elderly theological students who studied, graduated and were then delightfully serving with young people for example, she encouraged people to follow the voice of God and respond to it.

This kind of attitude toward old age was expressed best in “phuu suun aayu thii sanhaanhaam nai phantagit khoong prajao (Dignified elderly Christians in God's mission)”<sup>41</sup> which appeared in the same newsletter in 2006. In the same year, Church of Christ in Thailand held a workshop for those who were going to reach the retirement age in Chiang Mai. In her Bible study workshop, Arayaprteep spoke to participants that they did not have to regard themselves as someone useless. She suggested that participants should instead prepare themselves for a new step toward serving church and communities in Thai society with confidence and enjoyment. This was because “we are God's and we live for doing God's mission.”<sup>42</sup> Taking Proverb 16: 31, “White hair is a crown of glory (*saksii*), if it is found in the way of righteousness,” she questioned how we could become dignified elderly Christians who wore a crown of glory (*saksii*). She distinguished the term *saksii* used only for human and other created beings in Thai Bible from the term *prasiri*, which means glory as used for God. We can understand that God gives *saksii* to human through God's *prasiri*. Thus, Proverb 16: 31 is a message to live *our God-given* lives by responding to God's will. A crown of glory (*saksii*) should be sought by using our God-given talents that reflects God's *prasiri* (Corinthians 1, 12-4-11). Therefore, our lives have “value, mission, meaning and purpose respectively.”<sup>43</sup> It might be her sense of humor that she, over the age of eighty, used “scattered flowers” as a metaphor to express senescence. She mentioned several names of flowers we could find in Chiang Mai in June. After fulfilling their roles, flowers

scatter, flutter down to the ground and fill the soil with colorful petals. Every time she walked on scattered flower petals, she thought of God's *prasiri* and flowers' *saksii* appeared there. She could recognize the blessing that God allowed her to walk on these beautiful petals. She compared elderly Christians' lives to "scattered flowers" and spoke to participants that they were given the next mission as dignified elderly Christians to use their lives in bringing love and blessings to others. This was because the life after the retirement was also the best opportunity which God gave in order to bring God's blessings to people all around the world.<sup>44</sup>

## Discussion

These results lead us to the conclusion that Arayarateep's theological discourse, which is based on a great longing to be a *truly man*, had three related themes as follows. Firstly, in her theological discourse, the conversion to Christ was understood as the only way to return to God and to be a truly man. It seems to be connected to her strong confidence in ecumenism. As she understood ecumenism as a challenge to establish a single Church, a greater Christian unity, she had been eagerly working for ecumenical movement mainly in the 1970s at the World Council of Churches. She demonstrated her commitment to dialogue with other Christian denominations inside and outside Thailand as well.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, people who believed in non-Christian religions were understood as those who were still waiting for the salvation through Christ. This kind of attitude also appeared in her reflection paper on the trip to China. Hence, establishing faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women was one of her major concerns. If we look at this from a different angle, from the current perspective of religious pluralism as an example, Arayaprateep's understanding of ecumenism might be criticized. She could be critiqued for a lack in openness and void of interactive attitude

toward other religions as her exclusivism insists on absoluteness and supremacy of Christianity. However, M. M. Thomas pointed out in *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered* that there is no Christian standpoint which is based on pure exclusivism, inclusivism or pluralism. Arayaprateep's understanding of ecumenism should not be totally equated with so-called religious exclusivism or Christian exclusivism.<sup>46</sup> Since "Christianity" in her theological discourse is not a religion and "conversion" refers to converting to Jesus Christ himself, then her theological discourse can be interpreted as "Jesus Christ-absolutism" instead of Christianity-absolutism. Therefore, we should not conclude that she had a very conservative theological discourse simply through her strong expressions as based on her bible knowledge in her written ecumenism.

In fact, in the hearing investigation at the Bangkok Institute of Theology, the author also obtained contradictory information that she was sometimes criticized for being *too liberal* by Christian community in Thailand. For example, while Moses had been commonly believed to have written the first five books of Bible by conservative theologians, Arayaprateep said that she did not believe in that way. Interestingly, the author obtained an information that she did not believe anything which had been considered as Satan's action to people. While there were a lot of Thai Christians who blamed Satan for unfortunate and bad events, she argued that Satan had been used as a scapegoat for their own irresponsibility. Arayaprateep also imagined that Satan could be smart and beautiful in contrast to others' beliefs that Satan was stupid and ugly. Hence, if one's weakness fell on handsome guys, Satan would simply transform into a handsome guy. If one's weakness is money, Satan would transform into money. Therefore, the main distinctive element that separated her from other contemporary Christians was her absolute trust in God, which should not to be interpreted as having inherited a conservative mind-set of Christian exclusivism. In addition to this, the author's hearing investigation

brought a new image of her personality which differed from the image of a dignified Biblical theologian emerged from strong expressions in her papers, her outstanding academic and professional backgrounds, and her absolute trust in God. On the contrary, her personality was thoughtful, attentive to people, and very far from self-centeredness. She was born before the war, suffered from illness and loneliness in her early years, and encountered with Christian faith in the hospital. Her experience of conversion changed her to develop her ability in order to serve God and people. Thus, the author would like to conclude that she was the person who contented with honest poverty and lived in her absolute trust in God at the same time.

Secondly, the desire to establish a faith-based relationship among Asian Christian women was one of her major concerns because *truly man* includes both men and women created in the image of God. However, she discerned that women who participated in such dialogue were limited to women who were highly educated, proficient in English, and some of them were even ordained.

Thirdly, in Arayaprateep's theological discourse, it was not just an event like an initiation for one to be truly human through conversion and restoration of a relationship with God. It should be translated as a lifelong-dedication from her teenage to senescence. For these reasons, life after the retirement was also understood as a new chance to serve God as a next mission. In this aspect, the paper written in 2006 was an invaluable record of her life-long dedication. To borrow her phrase, we could conclude that she was a theologian with a great spirituality who proved that "the more we serve God, the greater joy we receive"<sup>47</sup> and "even though we're just a single flower, we can live in the glory of God."<sup>48</sup> As this paper has focused on Arayaprateep's identity and theological discourse, these results have left much room for further study. For

instance, the committee of Theologically Trained Women (*Satri sasanawat*) of the Church of Christ in Thailand, formed by her in 1988, remains as a matter to be discussed in further study.<sup>49</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Kwok Puilan, *Introducing Asian Feminist Theology*, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, p. 40.
- 2 The Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT), the largest Protestant denomination in Thailand today, is based on the Laos Mission, which was founded by Daniel and Sophia McGilvary in 1879. Thai Protestant churches gained nominal independence with the foundation of the “Church in Siam” in 1934; however, the influences of missionaries and Princeton theology, which tended to ignore indigenous culture and religion, were firmly maintained until the 1970s. See Herbert R. Swanson, *Krischak Muang Nua*, Chuaw Printing Press, Chiang Mai, 1984.
- 3 John C. England, et al., *Asian Christian Theologies: Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide for Authors, Movements, Sources*, Orbis Books, New York, 2004.
- 4 Conducted in December 2012.
- 5 Surprisingly enough, documents written in Asian languages except for authors’ mother tongues have tended to be ignored in Asian women’s theological movement, because of a strong emphasis on using English as a common language to share their ideas, experiences and theological reflections.
- 6 Harold F. Gross (ed.), *Echoes*, Issue No. 349, September 2008, The Church of Christ in Thailand, Office of Ecumenical Relations.
- 7 Kamol Arayaprateep, “The Covenant: An Effective Tool in Bible Study,” *South East Asia Journal of Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1977, p. 28.
- 8 Emphasis mine.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 31.
- 10 *Idem.*

- 11 Kamol Arayaprateep, "Christology," *Asian Women Doing Theology: Report from Singapore Conference, November 20-29, 1987*, AWRC, 1989, p. 172.
- 12 Idem.
- 13 Ibid., p. 173.
- 14 The committee of Theologically Trained Women Committee and Asian Network Association of Women in Ministry and Theology.
- 15 Kamol Arayaprateep, "May the Lord's Church Be One: Reflection on the Trip to China," *In God's Image*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1991B, p. 14.
- 16 See บุญรัตน์ บัวเย็น, เชิญมารู้จักกันสมาคมคริสตจักรในประเทศไทย, มหาวิทยาลัยพายัพ, 2011, หน้า 16.
- 17 Arayaprateep, 1991B, p. 15.
- 18 Idem. Emphasis mine.
- 19 Idem.
- 20 Idem.
- 21 Ibid., p. 14.
- 22 Ibid., p. 16.
- 23 Arayaprateep, 1991B, p. 16.
- 24 Idem.
- 25 Idem.
- 26 Idem.
- 27 Kamol Arayaprateep, "Conversion: A Universal Need," *The Ecumenical Reviews*, Vol. 44, Issue 4, October 1992, p. 404.
- 28 Idem.
- 29 Ibid., p. 406.

30 Idem.

31 Ibid., p. 404.

32 Ibid., p. 407.

33 Ibid., p. 408.

34 Idem.

35 Idem.

36 Idem.

37 Arayaprateep, 1991B, p. 15.

38 กมล อารยะประทีป, คริสตจักรต้องการศิษยาภิบาล, ข่าวคริสตจักร, 2002, หน้า 49-50.

39 See Alex G. Smith, *Siamese Gold: A History of Church Growth in Thailand: An Interpretive Analysis 1816-1982*, Kanok Bannasan (OMF Publisher), 2004, pp. 218-221.

40 Ibid., p. 50.

41 กมล อารยะประทีป, ผู้สูงอายุที่ส่งงามในพันธกิจของพระเจ้า: โครงการค่ายบุคคลากรเกษียณอายุงาน, สภาคริสตจักรฯ, ข่าวคริสตจักร, 2006, หน้า 31-33.

42 Ibid., p. 31.

43 อารยะประทีป, 2006, หน้า 31.

44 Ibid., p. 33.

45 The author obtained information that Arayaprateep had worked as a proposer of forming an ecumenical prayer meeting in cooperation with Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, especially the Society of Jesus both in Chiang Mai and in Bangkok. As she made a great effort to dialogue, her attitude toward other Christian denominations is still highly evaluated by Catholic priest in Thailand.

- 46 M. M. Thomas, "A Christ-Centered Humanist Approach to Other Religions in the Indian Pluralistic Context," in Gavin D' Costa, *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, Orbis Books, 1990, pp. 49-62.
- 47 อารยะประทีป, 2006, หน้า 33.
- 48 Idem.
- 49 Kamol Arayaprteep, "Theologically Trained Women in Thailand," in *Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, (eds.,) Workshop on Women in Theological Education: November 2-10, 1993*, ATESEA, 1993, pp. 70-72.

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