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## Religious Education Association

The REA is an Association of Professors, Practitioners, and Researchers in Religious Education.

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April 22, 2021

## REA Statement on Racism and Hate Crimes against Asian Americans

The Religious Education Association condemns anti-Asian racism, and the shooting of eight people including six Asian American women in Atlanta on March 16th, 2021. The tragic and senseless murder in a violent hate crime is the result of anti-Asian racism which targeted Asian women. The act of anti-Asian racism was aided and abetted by gun violence, another ongoing tragedy in the United States. The lack of strong gun policies in the United States continues to shock and horrify people. We are enraged as more people continue to become victims of gun violence in Boulder, Indianapolis, and elsewhere. We need legislators to implement serious gun control policies.

Racism against Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) has a long and invisibilized history in the United States. The Page Act of 1875 was the very first American anti-immigration law aimed at preventing Chinese women from immigrating to the U.S because of hypersexualization. The Chinese Exclusion Act followed in 1882. The roots of anti-Asian racism lie in white supremacy and US trans-Continental militarism as well as pernicious Orientalism, hypersexualization, and fetishization of Asian women. This has been fostered in American culture, media, and academia. We witnessed this trope in comments denying the racism of the perpetrator after the targeting and murder of these six Asian American women among the eight killed in Atlanta. We are at a moment where we urgently need to call out and work against the ways Asian and Asian American people and especially women continue to be erased in our institutions and classrooms today.

As an international association of Religious Educators, we are committed to teaching with the understanding that life is sacred. As such it is a travesty to erase, invisibilize, and objectify any

person in our human family. We are in solidarity with our colleagues who are Asian, Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders. We name the ways their stories have been invisibilized in both the public sphere and in academe. We commit ourselves to growing in solidarity with AAPI and with all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) communities. We encourage our guild to reach for greater amplification of AAPI scholars and voices in academic studies and research. We counter historic invisibilization with the explicit act of visibilization in our work with Asian American colleagues and students. We counter the white supremacist distortion of AAPI women throughout history and in academe by amplifying their lives and their scholarship.

As a professional association of educators, researchers and practitioners, we call upon our membership to educate for change in our society and dedicate ourselves to the collective work of eradicating white supremacy and hate. We call upon our members to commit to solidarity and consider joining these calls to action and learning as part of our common understanding:

- Review the resources provided by REA and others on Stop AAPI Hate: History and Narratives and share with colleagues and students [link]
- REA members who identify as AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) are invited to a closed round table for a shared opportunity of hope and healing on Wednesday, May 12th from 7-8:30pmET. Click here to register for this closed roundtable
- REA will offer a roundtable for those who wish to be in solidarity with AAPI people against anti-Asian racism, including ways for REA to continue to support its members in this work on Tuesday, May 18th from 7-8:30pmET. Click here to register for this roundtable.
- Renewed calls and direct action for legislation on Gun Control and Gun Policy

As acts of commitment and love, remember their names:

Xiaojie Tan  
Delaina Ashley Yaun Gonzalez  
Daoyou Feng  
Paul Andre Michels  
Soon Chung Park  
Hyun-Jung Kim (Grant)  
Yong Ae Yue  
Suncha Kim

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