

# **Making Paper Cranes: Toward an Asian American Feminist Theology**

## *Discussion Guide*

1. How would you define the “Perpetual Foreigner Syndrome”? Do you see the syndrome impacting other ethnic groups besides Asian Americans, and in what way?
2. What positive or negative connotations do you see associated with the “Model Minority Myth”? Do you think the positive connotations help create an accurate image? Are there ways to capitalize on the more positive aspects of the model minority image, or do you see it as equally oppressive in the end?
3. The author talks about the impossible standards, tyrannical silence, and the unrealistic and exotic sexuality that are central to the image of the Asian American woman. Describe the ways these limits are impressed on Asian American women. Are there other limits beyond the three?
4. What are some contextual differences between traditional white feminism and Asian American feminism? Is it helpful to have a distinction?
5. How would you describe the impact of “names” (labels, categories, designations) according to Nami Kim? Is there a difference between being named and the act of naming? How does this affect dynamics in terms of social and political interactions between people of different ethnicities?
6. Gale Yee offers a fresh reading of the story of Ruth that is applicable to the Asian American experience. What are some narratives that have shaped your identity and concept of God in new ways? Are they traditional readings or offered through a different lens, and which impact you more? Moreover, there is a sense that an openness to other writings to supplement reading Biblical narratives is important. Are there stories from the Bible or stories that are myths or legends, or cultural or historical stories that inform your sense of self?
7. How does the incarnation of God in Jesus inform your identity? Rita Nakashima Brock talks about “interstitial integrity” as a way to live out the same wholeness of God Incarnate, in other words by being conscientious of the ways cultures are integrated in your life. Do you see similar intersections in your own life in terms of Jesus’ family, his culture, his religion, as well as his sense of purpose? Does seeing Jesus as a hybrid of cultures and stories help you to potentially see your identity in the same way?
8. Often it seems the theological premise of justification by grace is straightforward but to live it out is another matter. Sometimes it means confronting many cultural pressures (both from within and without the church) and using song, myth, and other subversive methods as Anne Dondapati Allen writes in Chapter 6. What are some other subversive ideas and ways

to counter the stereotypes of women that prevent them from wholly embracing God's full love for them?

9. What pieces of the images of communion and table fellowship that Boyoung Lee brings to the experience of community resonate with you?
10. The Holy Spirit is often a difficult topic to engage in tangible ways. How does the spirituality of Asian women contribute to a theology of the Holy Spirit? Do you see syncretism, vulnerability, and imagination as helpful to the conversation about the experience of the Holy Spirit?
11. How have you experienced collision and fragmentation in your own life? How have you dealt with all the pieces? Is an embodied process too painful or difficult to use in addressing the experience of collision and fragmentation? What are some tenets from liberation theologies as offered by Aloysius Pieris, Gustavo Gutierrez, and James Cone that might help one to navigate these difficulties?
12. How would you define "third space"? What are some necessary components to the third space? The author talks about the potential of the domestic space as a surprising kind of third space. Are there are other possibilities?
13. How would you define "threshold space"? The author talks about threshold space as also being a way to describe third space. What would a threshold space look like?
14. What are some challenges you see to continuing this process of articulating an Asian American feminist theology? Do you see potential overlap and impact on the larger church?