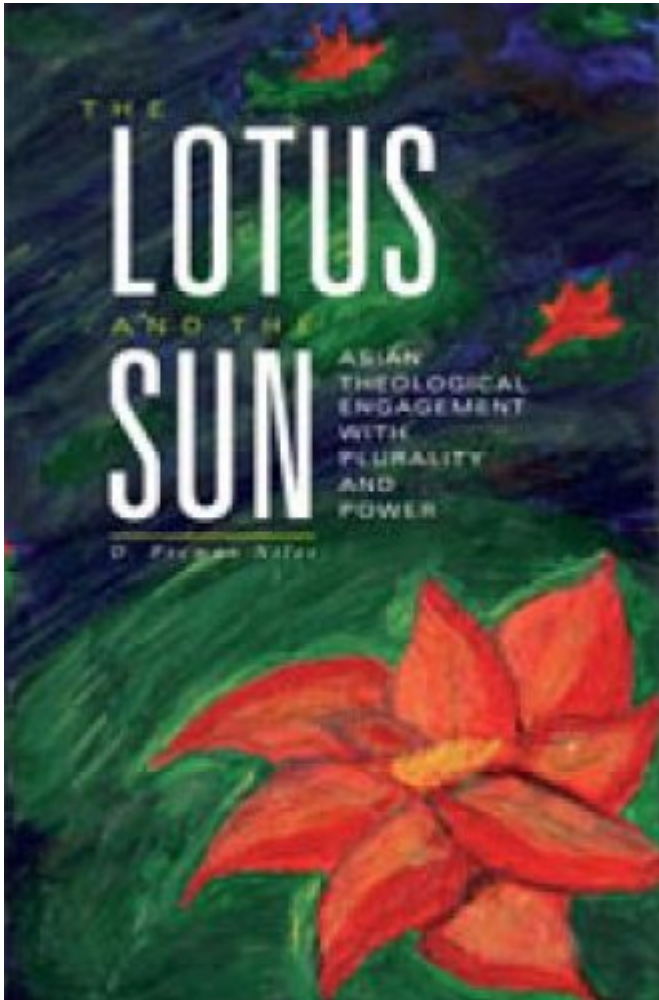


The Lotus and the Sun, by D. Preman Niles

selected by [Damayanthi M. A. Niles](#) in the [October 14, 2015](#) issue

In Review



The Lotus and the Sun

by D. Preman Niles

Barton Books

This study of Christianity as it is described and expressed in Asia looks at how to circumnavigate power, both missionary and colonial, and how to address plurality in all its manifestations to give rise to an articulation of the Christian faith that has an

authentic Asian flavor. Niles discusses theology and history as well as ecumenical and interfaith interactions as they play themselves out in Asian Christian movements—all the while making the familiar strange.

My students generally assume that their experience as Western Christians is universal. *The Lotus and the Sun* startles them into looking at their life in the faith anew through a perspective that does not use their own tradition as a barometer. They move from being passive receivers of information to actively engaging both with this new perspective and with their own, and they begin to see themselves as critical participants in the shaping of the material they receive. They also lose the belief that Christianity is a single narrative.

It is only fair to confess that the author is a relative of mine. Members of my family have studied and written about the Christian faith since 1821. The writer is thus able to draw on generations of stories, connections, and ministerial practice. This rich blend appeals to my students and adds yet another layer to their conversation about the interface between ministerial expressions and theological and cultural perspectives.