

From teen dating to public displays of affection, from the fishing girls and big moneys that wander discos in search of romance to the changing shape of sex in the Chinese city, this is a book like no other. James Farrer immerses himself in the vibrant nightlife of Shanghai, draws on individual and group interviews with Chinese youth, as well as recent changes in popular media, and considers how sexual culture has changed in China since its shift to a more market-based economy. More and more men and women in China these days are having sex before marriage, creating a new youth sex culture based on romance, leisure, and free choice. The Chinese themselves describe these changes as an opening up in response to foreign influences and increased Westernization. Farrer explores these changes by tracing the basic elements in talk about sex and sexuality in Shanghai. He then shows how Chinese youth act out the sometimes-contradictory meanings of sex in the new market society. For Farrer, sexuality is a lens through which we can see how China imagines and understands itself in the wake of increased globalization. Through personal storytelling, neighborhood gossip, and games of seduction, young men and women in Shanghai balance pragmatism with romance, lust with love, and seriousness with play, collectively constructing and individually coping with a new culture based on market principles. With its provocative glimpse into the sex lives of young Chinese, then, *Opening Up* offers something even greater: a thoughtful consideration of China as it continues to develop into an economic superpower.

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