



# **Paradise Redefined: Transnational Chinese Students and the Quest for Flexible Citizenship in the Developed World**

*Vanessa Fong*

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# Paradise Redefined: Transnational Chinese Students and the Quest for Flexible Citizenship in the Developed World

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In 2004, Vanessa Fong offered a groundbreaking ethnographic exploration of the social, economic, and psychological development of children born since China's one-child policy was introduced in 1979. Her book *Only Hope* left readers with a picture of stressed, ambitious adolescents for whom elite status was the ultimate goal, though relatively few were in a position to achieve it.

In *Paradise Redefined*, Fong tracks the experiences of many in her initial cohort of Chinese only-children—now college-age—as they study abroad in Australia, Europe, Japan, New Zealand, North America, and Singapore. While earning a prestigious college education in China is the main path to elite status, study abroad provides an alternative channel by offering a particularly flexible "developed world" citizenship. This flexible citizenship promises the potential for greater happiness and freedom afforded by transnational mobility, but also brings with it unexpected suffering, ambivalence, and disappointment. *Paradise Redefined* offers insights into China's globalization by examining the expectations and experiences that affect how various Chinese students make decisions about studying abroad, staying abroad, immigration, and returning home.

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