

Passage to Manhood: Youth Migration, Heroin, and AIDS in Southwest China (Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian In)

Shao-hua Liu

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Passage to Manhood addresses the intersection of modernity, heroin use, and HIV/AIDS as they are embodied in a new rite-of-passage among young men in the Sichuan province of southwestern China. Through a nuanced analysis of the Nuosu population, this book seeks to answer why the Nuosu has a disproportionately large number of opiate users and HIV positive individuals relative to others in Sichuan. By focusing on the experiences of Nuosu migrants and drug users, it shows how multiple modernities, individual yearnings, and societal resilience have become entwined in the Nuosu's calamitous encounter with the Chinese state and, after long suppression, their efforts at cultural reconstruction.

This ethnography pits the Nuosu youths' adventures, as part of their passage to manhood, against the drastic social changes in their community and, more broadly, China over the last half century. It offers fascinating material for courses on migration, globalization, youth culture, public health, and development at both undergraduate and graduate levels.



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