



Asian Studies Review in China

Notice to members: *Asian Studies Review in China*.

We write to inform you about censorship that has restricted access to the Asian Studies Association of Australia's journal, *Asian Studies Review* (ASR), in China.

The ASAA is proud to publish *ASR*, one of the world's leading Asian Studies journals. The ASAA publishes the journal in association with the Taylor & Francis publishing house. Taylor & Francis distributes the journal for us worldwide, in both print and electronic form.

Recently, an ASAA member alerted us to the fact that access to *ASR* would be restricted in China. Taylor & Francis subsequently confirmed this information: effective September 2018, Chinese "import agencies" (which are part of the government) have decided to not include *ASR* in their Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences subscription package. Importers have discretion to accept the package as a whole, or to pick and choose what to include. Chinese importers have decided, on the grounds of "compliance with local regulations", that *ASR* will be one of about 40 excluded journals in the fields of China and/or area studies because some of its content is deemed inappropriate to the government.

Taylor & Francis has confirmed that the Chinese import agencies deemed six articles in the *ASR* objectionable. We asked the publisher to identify the articles in question, but T&F denied our request on the grounds that this information is commercially sensitive.

The effect of the decision by the import agencies is to restrict access by readers in China to articles published in *ASR* from September 2018 onward. Such readers will still be able to read *ASR* articles published before September 2018 if their library currently subscribes to it. They will also be able to read any current article in the journal, including free content, if sent a link to the article.

In recent times, the Chinese government has initiated wide-ranging censorship of academic publications, in ways that have embroiled academic publishers. You can find links to articles on the ensuing controversies: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/01/world/asia/china-springer-nature-censorship.html>, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2107686/odd-inclusions-chinese-censors-crude-cambridge>, and <https://www.asianstudies.org/asia-now/entryid/103/update-on-chinese-censorship-of-academic-publications>.

The ASAA will be working with Taylor & Francis to attempt to restore full access to *ASR* content for readers in China. In doing so, the ASAA restates its absolute commitment to freedom of scholarly expression, debate, and inquiry.

ASAA Executive Committee

Edward Aspinall (President)

Kate McGregor (Vice President)

Melissa Crouch (Secretary)

David Hundt (Editor-in-Chief, Asian Studies Review)

20 December 2018

Addition, 23 December 2018, statement from Taylor and Francis:

<https://newsroom.taylorandfrancisgroup.com/taylor-francis-social-sciences-and-humanities-library/>