

Publishers' Pledge on Chinese Censorship of Translated Works

As publishers we cherish and champion the freedom to read, write, and publish and the power of ideas to transcend geographic and political divides. We recognize that free expression underpins the success of our businesses and the breadth of our contributions to society.

The emergence of China among the world's largest and most dynamic markets for books represents an enormous opportunity for cultural dialogue and the engagement of new audiences. As publishers, we commit ourselves to a considered and principled approach to dealing with Chinese censorship. While we bring common values to questions of free expression and censorship worldwide, the pace of our engagement with China renders that market an important and emblematic case deserving particular attention.

A May 2015 report by PEN American Center explored the difficult dilemma faced by many foreign authors when publishing in China: grappling with proposed cuts or changes to their work demanded by their Chinese publisher to comply with the government's censorship regime. Some authors agree to certain cuts or changes, some decline and must forgo publication on the mainland, and many others are unaware that cuts are being made at all, discovering that their book has been censored only after it has been released in China.

- Evan Osnos declined to publish *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China* in mainland China when it became clear that about 25% of the book would be "revised" or cut in the Mandarin edition. Osnos published an uncensored version in Taiwan, some bootleg copies of which are available in the mainland.
- Andrew Solomon was unaware that sections of his book *The Noonday Demon* relating to his experience as a gay man had been excised from the mainland Chinese edition until PEN American Center conducted a side-by-side comparison of the original and the Mandarin text, years after the book was released.
- Martín Caparrós agreed to cut portions of his book *Hunger*, discussing the history of famines, to excise mention of China's Great Famine and the resulting deaths of 40 million people. After extensive reflection, Caparrós decided to accept censorship in order to allow the rest of the book to be published in China.

Working with authors, agents, and international publishing partners, we pledge to take the following steps for all books for which we control Chinese publication rights, where publication in Chinese on the Chinese mainland is contemplated:

- Undertake an assessment of whether the book includes political or historical content known to be censored by Chinese authorities.

Where censorship is identified as a risk:

- Alert the author that censorship in the Chinese translation is a possibility, and refer the author to resources to help understand the related risks and options.

- Before publishing arrangements are concluded, initiate dialogue with involved Chinese editors and publishers, aiming to promote a constructive, collaborative approach to minimize censorship and ensure that no cuts occur absent the author's consent.
- Ensure that all relevant publishing contracts require a full and faithful translation and require that any cuts or changes to the text must be approved by the author.
- Work only with trusted Chinese publishing partners who will communicate openly regarding censorship issues and will ensure that the author is aware of and approves any changes made to the text before publication goes forward.
- Support authors in seeking to reduce or eliminate objectionable cuts or changes to the text.

- Pursue Chinese language licensing opportunities outside of China, including Taiwan and Hong Kong publishers.
- Support authors' efforts to make censored and cut material available to readers on their websites and through other appropriate outlets.

These steps are intended to ensure that the principles of free expression that have underwritten our industry since its inception continue to prevail as we work with new partners and in new environments. They are intended to make possible deeper and richer engagement between international and Chinese authors and publishers, helping to support the free flow of ideas and literature worldwide.

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Graywolf Press • Grove Atlantic • Hachette • Macmillan • New Directions • OR Books • Other Press
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