

A redesign for New Asia Books

After almost 7 years of serving the worldwide Asian Studies community, we thought it was time to elevate the popular New Asia Books site to current web standards. With a redesign also comes a new address: www.newbooks.asia (but rest assured, the old address www.newasiabooks.org still works). We listened to our site users and as a result changed a few structural elements without touching too much of its textual design. A major improvement is that the site now responds to the visitor's screen size. No matter on which device you are browsing, the content is always clearly readable. (fig.1)

Thomas Voorter

THE INITIAL PURPOSE of New Asia Books remains: to help busy scholars keep track of the vast array of Asian Studies books that are published every month, and to free them from time-consuming and potentially unproductive searches for new material. A book search on a site such as Amazon will throw up a long list of responses relating to books published

several years ago – books that an experienced academic will either already have read or have made an active decision not to read. New Asia Books presents you with only exactly what is necessary: a list of current publications in your field of expertise.



Content

Although an ongoing and never-ending endeavour, we aim to include only current and recent titles on the site, weeding out not yet published (NYP) titles, and older titles. The books are presented with factual information such as author(s), editor(s), publication date, ISBN, and – where available – a jacket image, detailed description, table of contents, and biographical information. Following the Book Industry Communication (BIC) classification schemes, each publication is tagged according to regional and disciplinary categories (mainly within the Humanities, Social Sciences, and the Arts).

The website receives new bibliographic data every month from Nielsen BookData, a major bibliographic data provider. However, we also encourage publishers to maintain their lists of publications on the site through their Partner Account (see below) and inform us of any new titles that have become available for review. Many publishers are already in direct contact with our reviews coordinator – those who are not, are encouraged to do so.

Search and find

You can benefit fully from the site by using the faceted search function, prominently at the top of the page. On the search results page, you can narrow down your results by checking the categories. (Fig. 2) The site also helps you to automatically find titles with similar content. On every book page there is an easy way to bookmark what you've found or to send the information to your favourite social media account or email address. For some site features – like bookmarking or submitting a review – you first need to login. We have simplified the login procedure by also allowing you to use your existing Facebook, Twitter, Google or LinkedIn account, without having to create an extra account for New Asia Books.

3.

Write a review

New Asia Books is the place to go for the latest book reviews, many of which are also published in The Newsletter. New Asia Books reviews cover the very latest publications from a wide variety of publishers. You'll find high quality, critical essays and not just short marketing blurbs.

All users of the site are able to directly post reviews of books they have read and evaluated, but users can also request a review copy if they do not yet have the book in their possession. To identify which book you would like to review, follow the instructions in the <Write a review> section and continue to <Available for review>. (Fig. 3) You will be presented with a list of books available for review. The <Request review copy> link below each title will lead you to the appropriate request form. (Fig. 4) The reviews coordinator will inform you whether your request has been approved, and how to proceed from there.

4.

2.

The Newsletter is published by IAS (Leiden, the Netherlands) four times a year. It prints a number of reviews in each issue – reviews that are generated by the New Asia Books website. The Newsletter editor is also the reviews coordinator; the coordinator keeps track of all new titles available for review, hardcopies sent out, review submissions, and makes a selection of reviews for each issue. However, all submitted reviews are published online on the New Asia Books website.

Partner Accounts – for publishers

Publishers of books pertaining to Asia and Asian Studies are invited to join as New Asia Books partners. Partners have password protected access to the site, enabling them to update and add content to the New Asia Books database. Each partner has a profile page where all contact and direct ordering information can be listed (or links to online book sellers/distributors). Partners are encouraged to list all their current titles and to inform the reviews coordinator of any new titles that become available for review. Upon a request from one of our reviewers, the publisher will be contacted and asked to send out a review copy. The ensuing reviews are published on the New Asia Books website – and a select few are also printed in The Newsletter (see pages 41-44).

Learn more

You are most welcome to contact the site administrator and the reviews coordinator with any queries or suggestions you may have, or for guidance through the registration process to become a User or a Partner. Also, please do get in touch with any questions about requesting review copies or criteria for writing a review.

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