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Chinese author Yuan Hongbing poses at the launch of his latest book, *Fleeing China*, in Taipei in a file photo taken on Nov. 24, 2013.

**Photo: CNA**

Eslite Bookstore (遠流) in Hong Kong is said to have pulled Tibet-related books off its shelves out of political concerns, an allegation that has touched raw nerves in the territory, which has been venting its fury at Beijing.

Meanwhile, it was revealed yesterday that Taiwan's Eslite issued an in-company document prohibiting its workers to make comments about the company on social media without approval.

Hong Kong's *Apple Daily* reported on June 19 that Hong Kong book lovers could no longer find books about Tibetan human rights issues in Eslite's first overseas outlet, in Hong Kong's Causeway Bay area.

The report said the company has bowed to pressure from Beijing, pulling the works of Wang Lixiong (王力雄) — a Chinese author and Tibetologist who writes about ethnic policy and has drawn attention from Chinese authorities.

The self-censorship is said to be related to the bookstore's plan to open new outlets in Shanghai and Soochow, China.

The report cited a source as saying that the outlet had just had an in-store book fair on Tibet in March, showcasing Tibet-related works, including Wang's and those of Tsering Woeser, a well-known Tibetan writer and dissident. However, their books were removed from the exhibition and later from shelves altogether after an executive's inspection.

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The outlet's workers jointly signed a letter to Eslite founder Robert Wu (吳勝偉), the report said, protesting what they considered the gagging of the freedom of speech and denouncing the company's sacrificing of democratic values for access to China's market.

They also said that if Hong Kong Eslite could not safeguard those values, "today's Hong Kong would be tomorrow's Taiwan."

Last year, Taiwan's Eslite chain came under fire when it allegedly refused to carry a book about Beijing's persecution of Tibetan monks, *Death of a Buddha — The Truth behind the Death of the 10th Panchen Lama* (達賴喇嘛與西藏的未來), by exiled Chinese writer Yuan Hongbing (袁宏斌) and Tibetan author Namloyak Dhungser.

Meanwhile, Eslite is requiring its Taiwanese employees to stay tight-lipped about the company's operations, according to a Facebook post by National Chengchi University professor Hsu Shih-jung (許世瑩).

Hsu cited an alleged company document dated Wednesday last week that he said was given to him by an Eslite employee. Hsu said the memo prohibits employees "from disclosing any information about Eslite on the Internet or to the media without its permission."

According to Hsu's source, the bookstore recently included the confidentiality clause in its employment contract, which it asks new hires to sign prior to assigning them a post.

"The Hong Kong *Apple Daily* report was confirmed by the Taiwanese worker, who gave me the copy," Hsu said. "[The whistle-blower] said employees at the Hong Kong outlet are brave enough to voice their objections, while Taiwanese workers, despite also feeling outraged, are too worried about losing their jobs to protest."

When reached for response, Taiwan Eslite said that every company has its own management policies, adding that "it might be that the timing of this has raised some doubt, but [the issuance of it] is simply a standard procedure."

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On the authenticity of the Hong Kong report, the company denied it had undertaken any special measures against certain books.

Minister of Culture Lung Ying-tai (呂英台) yesterday said that she had yet to put the incident into context, but added that she understood Eslite's position, as it plans to expand its business across the Taiwan Strait. She urged the public to respect Eslite's decision to pursue its business goals.

However, Grimm Culture Publishing Co (格林文化) editor-in-chief Hao Kuang-tsai (何光燾) said that Eslite should be subject to a higher level of public scrutiny.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2014/07/03](#)