

<<宗教哲学经典选读>>

图书基本信息

书名：<<宗教哲学经典选读>>

13位ISBN编号：9787301095720

10位ISBN编号：7301095724

出版时间：2005-9

出版时间：北京大学出版社

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页数：653

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前言

It has been with a special sense of pleasure that we have been able to work together in the production of this new anthology in philosophy of religion. Seven thousands miles separate us , but the computer world has helped shrink those miles for this exciting collaborative venture. The range includes nine areas of specialty falling under the philosophy of religion rubric. Various key authors from the past are included so as to provide historical perspectives on issues and problems discussed. The scholars enlisted are well recognized , and many have submitted their most recent contribution to their respective fields of specialty. We have had to work within certain space constraints but this has pushed us to include only the very best out there. Philosophy of religion is of special interest to the current Chinese scholarly world. Universities in China are developing new religious studies departments attracting a whole new genre of students gifted to pursue issues relating to the religious. It has been the delight of both editors to sense that interest and excitement as it is found in the classroom. Inquiry into the religious affects all other disciplines. The critical reflective processes of philosophical inquiry can aid the human spirit in this its most lofty of pursuits , namely , knowledge when available of the ultimate origin of things and their respective destinies. We are very grateful to the editors of Peking University Press for the invitation and their interest in the project from the very beginning. We also want to thank the Press for allowing the inclusion of illustrations thereby signaling and enhancing each topic in the Collection. Peking University Department Chair of Philosophy , Zhao Dunhua , is to be thanked for his supportive and affirmative role , as is also Bethel University Department Chair , Paul Reasoner for making the Copy Center facilities available for manuscript preparation. Special thanks to our friend , Professor Bruce Reichenbach (Augsburg College) , for his careful reading of various parts of the manuscript that led to needed refinements. We want to thank five undergraduate students at Bethel University , Joshua D. Bau III , Daniel Farmer , Justin Marshall , Jason Markley , and Mike Nordin for their careful proofreading of the manuscript. They have thus contributed to the overall quality of the work. But we especially want to thank Ms Marie Balsley Taylor for her masterful and artistic preparation of the manuscript. Without her careful attention to detail many errors and stylistic shortcomings would have otherwise gone unnoticed. Our special thanks to Professor Richard Swinburne of Oxford University for writing the Forward , and for his contributions to several topics in the Collection. We also want to thank various publishing houses in the West for making articles previously published accessible for inclusion in this work without fee , thereby allowing a potentially greater audience.

内容概要

There is probably no area in contemporary Western philosophy more exciting and engaging than philosophy of religion. The plethora of books and articles on topics falling within its domain evidences unmistakably the avid interest of philosophers, both those disposed to religious belief as well as those inclined to reject it. This is partly due to the interconnectedness of the topics generally associated with philosophy of religion. Some find a never-ending fascination with trying to weave various initially discordant strands into a coherent meaningful whole, while others, contrariwise, see nothing but loose ends and disconnectedness. For example, some, notably atheists, view the existence of evil as incompatible with one or more of Gods attributes. Others argue that the amount of evil in the world makes Gods existence strongly improbable. Theists have tried to address the former problem with various consistency strategies and the latter with evidential arguments designed to hold the line for the probability of Gods existence. There is also a cluster of troublesome and difficult questions relating to Christian theistic beliefs about Gods sovereignty and how it relates to human freedom and responsibility. The questions are indeed multivarious and often perplexing if not daunting; the stakes are as high as any life presents. But perhaps the chief reason for philosophy of religions attraction is the fact that considerations having to do with the existence and nature of a Supreme Being raises issues of ultimate concern. No issue surpasses it in terms of importance, ramification and implication. All else one endeavors to affirm in philosophy pivots, and rightly so, on claims made regarding whether such a being exists, and what sort of beliefs properly follow from affirmation or denial of Gods existence. Two basic orientations prevail in the literature in the West, the analytic way of thinking, or as some prefer to call it, Anglo-American philosophy, and Continental philosophy. The latter finds some representation in this collection, but some readers no doubt may think it not enough. The analytic is given greater attention for a number of reasons, only a few of which are only briefly stated here. Scant if any attention is given to arguments for the existence of God by Continental authors. Other topics typically included in Western philosophy of religion texts are also sparsely covered if at all, such as miracles, and other evidential sorts of topics, like the problem of evil. As for further representative balance, not only are the non-theists given a significant voice, authors from the three mainstream Christian traditions, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox can be found in their respective distinctiveness. A choice is apparent with regard to numbers of authors. Wholeness of an essay has been an important criterion rather than numbers of authors. Weve attempted to put together the best of the most recent materials available, some of which appears in book form for the first time. The topics selected are something of an index to the bulk of the literature: faith and reason, arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the attributes of God, miracles, religion and science, religion and ethics, death, identity, immortality and resurrection, and religious pluralism. Unlike my earlier anthology, *Philosophy of Religion, An Anthology of Contemporary Views* (also in a Chinese Edition), this new collection includes historical as well as contemporary authors. Philosophy cant be properly grasped apart from its historical context. One regret is that page constraints didnt allow a fuller historical panorama. The topics are briefly described below.

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