

From What Should We Learn?

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SYNOPSIS: Scholastic learning or learning is investigated in relation to non-Western nation-states, where people do not have the same worldview as successors to the legacy of Greco-Roman civilization. What is meant by “a worldview” is a system of interpretation of the external world. The worldview that those successors have is a product of Christianity, and based entirely on the dichotomy between the world of Idea and the phenomenal world, to use the Platonic terms. This worldview has formed the framework for learning and characterized learning in the West for more than two thousand years. Japan, a typical example of non-Western nation-states, has uncritically accepted this worldview since Japan opened to the world in the middle of the nineteenth century. In other words, Japan accepts the universality of Western civilization that naturally includes its framework for learning. As the result, the Japanese indigenous framework for learning is on the verge of extinction; then, Japanese people are approaching a cultural crisis. In other words, they undermine Japan as a nation state through accepting the Western framework for learning. How to overcome this problem is presented with an emphasis on significance of comparative mind in learning. Because other non-Western nation-states are confronted with the same kind of problem, the present discussion will be applicable to them.