

For Sadakata Sensei  
In grateful memory . . .

Philip Williams

"*Guten Tag, und wie geht's heute?*" you'd ask me.

"*Ganz gut und wie geht's bei Dir?*" I'd answer....

No poetry in such a dialogue.

Nor may I try to eulogize a man

I only spoke to six or seven times,

And then no longer than the hasty minutes

It took to bridge the time between our classes.

But neither may I easily forget

The early place you had in helping me

First feel the family heart of Doshisha....

You only stood as high as my necktie

— And I'm not sure how high you "stood" on that —

And yet you were a giant in some things.

You were a special internationalist,

Touching the core in spirit as in language.

For Denmark's Jespersen there was no one

Who followed with more faith—but British, French,

American, and many other cultures

Were always in your consciousness as well.

It was with German words you'd always greet me,

Careful to keep within my tiny limit.  
Then when I'd try my broken Japanese  
You'd turn to English, which you could employ  
Expertly — reading, writing, hearing, speaking —  
But always held back with rare modesty,  
Protesting all the while you had no skill  
To use the tongue you'd mastered long ago.  
With your sure common sense you had a touch  
That made you happy company anywhere.  
Back of your cigarette I always saw  
The trace of smiles that never patronized.

You'll be remembered and appreciated  
Always. I'll hope to *know* you better later.  
Meanwhile it's hard to say just "Sayonara."  
...*"Ruhe sanft, Sadakata Sensei!*  
*Aufwiedersehen, und schlafen Sie wohl."*