

## For Izumi Kadono, Proposal on our Lecture Series

I am very happy to give a series of lectures on the subject of “Milward Shimpu ni yoru Shakespeare Monogatari” sponsored by Angel Zaidan during the coming year. I quite agree that they should be presented in an autobiographical manner, which I have always found appealing to Japanese students. It so happens that I have published no fewer than three autobiographies, of which I only mentioned one, entitled *Issues of Life* (published by BookWay), but after our meeting I remembered another entitled *Pitfalls of Memory* (published by FastPencil), of which I am sending you a spare copy, and then there is a third, longer one, entitled *Genesis of an Octogenarian*, which you can find on the website of Fr Francis Britto, (<http://brittonia.logspot.com/>) As for the contents of the lectures, in accordance with your suggestions, I propose the following.

1. I might well begin with my “indoctrination” in Shakespeare at school, when from age 10 we read almost nothing but his plays for our classes on English, till we wondered if there was any other author worthy of our study in English literature. Then we not only read through his plays in class, with different parts assigned to different boys, but we had to learn the famous speeches by heart – an excellent education.

2. But then, as I was destined for the priesthood, I chose to concentrate on the Classics of Greek and Latin, and this choice was fostered in my early formation as a Jesuit, leading up to my entrance into Campion Hall, Oxford, in 1950. But then in 1952, owing to my destination for Japan, it was decided that I should change in midstream from the Classics to English, and then I realized how true had been my impression that Shakespeare was far superior to any other English author.

3. On arriving in Japan in 1954 (sixty years ago) I had to spend two years studying Japanese, and four years studying theology. So it wasn't till 1962 that I could begin my appointed task of teaching Shakespeare (and other authors) at Sophia University. This task had an early culmination in the fourth centenary of Shakespeare's birth, which I celebrated not only with the publication of my first book, *An Introduction to Shakespeare's Plays*, from Kenkyusha, but also with an ambitious program of events entrusted to me, culminating in a dramatic downfall with suspected TB. Then my question was “TB or not TB”.

4. Anyhow, the good arising from this illness was the award of a sabbatical in 1965, when I was granted a research fellowship at the Shakespeare Institute, then in Birmingham, enabling me to undertake special studies on “Shakespeare's Religious Background”. I later published them in book form from Sidgwick & Jackson in London, Indiana UP and Hokuseido in Japan in 1973.

5. Meanwhile, I was also taking up a more particular study of the religious controversies of the Elizabethan and the Jacobean ages at the Huntington Library in California, resulting in two more published books in 1977 and 1978 (from the Scolar Press), when Sophia University like so many other universities in Japan was convulsed by the Student Revolt of 1968-72. Yet that gave me an insight into the psychology behind the controversies of Shakespeare's time and of revolutions ever since.

6. From 1970 onwards I was only too happy to participate in the exodus of so many students from Japan, and to organize them in what I called "pilgrimages" to historical and literary places in the British Isles. These included a special Shakespearian pilgrimage in 1984, beginning with a seminar on the plays arranged by the Shakespeare Institute, now situated in Stratford. Thus I could not only bring my Japanese students to visit many places associated with Shakespeare but also see those places through Japanese eyes.

7. Besides continuing my research into the religious controversies at libraries in both America and England, I was undertaking further examination of the deep Biblical content of the plays, resulting (among other books) in one entitled *Biblical Themes in Shakespeare*, based on a course of lectures I gave at Campion Hall, Oxford, in 1973, and another entitled *Biblical Influences in Shakespeare's Great Tragedies* (published by Indiana UP in 1987). Such studies threw light on a deeper, unsuspected layer of religious meaning in the apparently secular plays, leading up to the Passion.

8. Meanwhile, I had founded a Renaissance Institute at Sophia University with the assistance of several colleagues, covering the period in English literature "from More to Milton", with a main emphasis on Shakespeare. From 1984 onwards this was based on a Renaissance Centre in the newly opened Sophia Library, while maintaining the independence of the Institute, which featured both annual publications and spring and autumn lectures.

9. Till that time the subject of "religion", especially "the Catholic religion", had been frowned upon by "the Shakespeare establishment", and I had to be careful not to seem overly "sectarian" in my approach to Shakespeare's religious background. But in the 1990's this became a strangely "hot topic", enabling me (as we say) to come "out of the closet" and to declare my "Catholic hypothesis" in a book entitled *The Catholicism of Shakespeare's Plays*, which was published in 1997 not only in Japan but also in England with brisk sales even at Stratford. In it I dealt with only seven plays, but in a subsequent book entitled *Shakespeare the Papist* (2005) I pursued the same hypothesis through all the plays in chronological order. Nor was my book the only one to appear in these years upholding much the same position.

10. Meanwhile, a special conference was held at the University of Lancaster in the summer of 1999 on “Lancastrian Shakespeare”, largely inspired by the so-called “Shakeshafte Theory”, according to an old tradition that the dramatist had once been “a schoolmaster in the country” – now identified as Lancashire, in the household of a Catholic gentleman named Houghton. My own contribution aimed at showing the Jesuit connections with Shakespeare’s schoolmasters at Stratford, one of whom had been a neighbor of that gentleman, implying a further connection with the famous Jesuit Edmund Campion. The following year I attended another conference at Stratford on “Shakespeare and Religions”, at which I offered a paper on “Shakespeare in Arden”.

11. Back in Japan, and at a seminar at Wheaton College near Chicago, to which I was invited as guest speaker, my further attention was taken up with the theme of what I called “meta-drama” – namely the metaphysical dimension of Shakespeare’s plays, especially his great tragedies, including not only the above-mentioned Biblical layer but also the contemporary religious situation in the transition from late Elizabethan (with *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*) to early Jacobean (with *Othello* and *King Lear*). After all, I considered, the dramatist wasn’t really interested in the mythical troubles of a Hamlet or a Macbeth, an Othello or a Lear – as Hamlet says of the visiting player, “What’s Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba, that he should weep for her?” But in their troubles he discerned significant parallels with those of his persecuted fellow countrymen in Elizabethan England.

12. Then, whereas most Shakespeare scholars concentrate on individual plays in the order as set forth in the First Folio, of comedies, histories and tragedies, I have come to see all the plays in their hidden connections with each other, according to what TS Eliot has memorably called “the Pattern in Shakespeare’s Carpet”, which is only perceived when taking all the plays together. This pattern I now saw as strangely following that of the mysteries of the Holy Rosary, beginning with the comedies as the “joyful mysteries”, followed by the tragedies as the “sorrowful mysteries”, and concluding with the romances or tragi-comedies as the “glorious mysteries”. Thus I omitted the so-called “histories”, which are either comedies (as in the two Falstaff plays) or tragedies (as in the two Richard plays), while leaving out the others as being more or less collaborative.

13-14. As for the last three lectures, I propose to present them in the form of detailed analyses of three notable plays, variously called (by DG James) “The Dream of Learning” and (in my latest publication) *Shakespeare’s Other World* (BookWay, 2014) – beginning with “Hamlet’s Question”, continuing with “Lear’s Sermon”, and concluding with “Prospero’s Meditation”.

With my thanks and best wishes both to yourself and to Professor Matsuda.

Peter Milward SJ