

Seeing All Things Whole

The Scientific Mysticism and Art of Kagawa Toyohiko (1888–1960)

Thomas John Hastings

Foreword by J. Wentzel van Huyssteen

KAGAWA TOYOHICO was one of the best-known evangelists and social reformers of the twentieth century. Founder of several religious, educational, social welfare, medical, financial, labor, and agricultural cooperatives, he was nominated twice for the Nobel Prize in Literature (1947 and 1948) and four times for the Nobel Peace Prize (1954, 1955, 1956, and 1960).

Appealing to the masses who had little knowledge of Christianity, Kagawa believed that a positive interpretation of nature was a key missiological issue in Japan. He reasoned that a faith, which is rooted in the “downward movement” of Christ’s incarnation, must support the scientific quest and meditate on the purpose or “upward movement” implicit in scientific findings. Through an anti-reductionist methodological pluralism that strives to “see all things whole,” this “scientific mystic” employed a wide range of Japanese and Western cultural resources to assert a complementary role for science and religion in modern society.

“Focusing on Kagawa’s scientific interest and its impact upon his thought, Hastings shows the famous Japanese Christian mystic, novelist, and political activist to have offered a prophetic vision of cosmic wholeness to a tragically divided modern world. In so doing, Hastings reclaims Kagawa’s vision for our own troubled time.”

—ANN ASTELL, Professor of Theology, University of Notre Dame

“This is truly an excellent intellectual biography of a Japanese Christian who declares ‘My religion is the life with the consciousness reconciled to the Creator of Heaven and earth in the mediation of Jesus Christ.’ His unrestricted movement between science and religion is to be expected, because he sees all dimensions of life artfully interpenetrating each other within the arcs of evolutionary history and redemptive love.”

—INAGAKI HISAKAZU, Professor of Philosophy, Tokyo Christian University, Japan

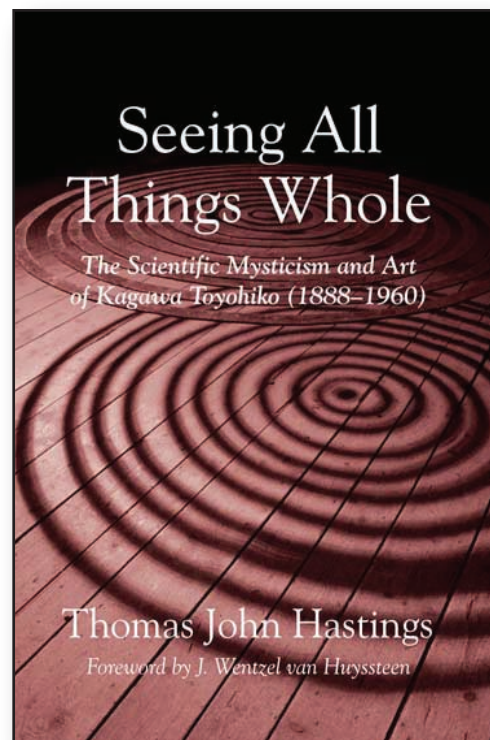
“Hastings offers a lucid intellectual biography of this great, controversial Japanese evangelist and social reformer. In a pluralistic and scientific age of *Interstellar* and quantum entanglement, Kagawa comes alive again in this volume and gives us a breathtaking glimpse of how all things hold together in Christ.”

—PAUL LOUIS METZGER, Professor of Christian Theology and Theology of Culture, Multnomah University

“Drawing extensively on Japanese sources and scholarship, *Seeing All Things Whole* provides an insightful intellectual genealogy and analysis of Kagawa’s thought and vision of the spiritual, social, and natural worlds. While this study explicates the relationship between Kagawa’s mystical experience and his understanding of modern science, it also provides readers with a deeper understanding of his involvement in a wide range of ‘cosmic repair’ activities—relief work in the slums and various forms of social and political engagement, for example—which occupied him to the end of his life.”

—MARK R. MULLINS, Professor of Japanese Studies, University of Auckland, New Zealand

THOMAS JOHN HASTINGS is Senior Research Fellow at the Japan International Christian University Foundation in New York City. He was formerly Director of Research at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, and Professor of Practical Theology at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary while serving as a Presbyterian Church (USA) mission coworker in Japan. He is editor of the recent translation of Kagawa’s *Cosmic Purpose* (Cascade Books) and author of *Practical Theology and the One Body of Christ*.



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Introduction

There are many approaches to the preparation of meals, yet if we divide these into two broad categories, we would find those who are adept at beginning with ingredients “on hand” and those who prefer a trustworthy recipe. That is, upon opening the refrigerator door, some immediately begin pondering how to make creative use of the items found there, while others head off to the supermarket with a list of ingredients required by a recipe.

Moving beyond the realm of food preparation and drawing on a key distinction in the Japanese language, let us call the first group “artists” (*geijutsuka*) and the second group “artisans” (*shokunin*). Generally speaking, painters, sculptors, poets, actors, composers, novelists, and so on are considered *geijutsuka*, while potters, *soba* (noodle) makers, woodcarvers, confectioners, and so on are called *shokunin*. Obviously, these distinctions are fluid rather than absolute, since we might easily imagine a potter who is an “artist” or a painter who is an “artisan.” With only rare exceptions, both artists and artisans undergo a period of rigorous study or training in some tradition, but if artisans faithfully preserve a tradition, artists push or subvert a tradition’s boundaries. Artists seem to possess some intuitive cognitive freedom that enables them to “indwell” the materials at hand and thereby create something new.

To return to the preparation of food, practiced artists and artisans are no doubt equally capable of producing delicious and satisfying meals, yet there is a distinction we make that may help to account in part for that certain “something extra” we attribute to the work of an artist. After tasting the meal of an artist, it may be difficult if not impossible to quickly identify all of the ingredients that went into the production. Indeed, we may feel no need for such a list at all, since the immediate enjoyment of the food eliminates a need for explanation or analysis. Perhaps this is how the experience of eating at the table of a great chef or of being hypnotized by a Vermeer painting or mesmerized by a Bach solo cello suite

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has something in common with the loss or expansion of self reported by great mystics, who claim to have experienced a Divine-human union (*unio mystica*) after years of prayer or meditation, or the great scientists, who come upon a historic discovery after years of painstaking observation and experimentation.

In contrast, even before tasting the artisan's meal, we often know exactly what we will eat. Indeed, in "artisanal" restaurants, which seem to be all the rage in our major cities today, the ingredients of each dish are clearly spelled out on the menu. In such cases, cognition anticipates, accompanies, and follows the tasting. Without doubt, this linkage of "first-order" perception and "second-order" cognition has a positive social function, i.e., it may enliven the conversation over dinner. Some take such a list of ingredients as an enhancement while others see it is a distraction. In the latter cases, we choose to be as fully present as possible to the pure experience of the meal in a "non-conceptual" kind of way. This indicates the obvious fact that the work of artists and artisans appeals to different audiences.

Consider the distinction between artists and artisans in terms of direct versus indirect modes of communication. Since the artisan fills in the blanks between immediate experience (perception) and second-level reflections on it (cognition), a direct mode of communication is clearly preferable. In contrast, seeking to free up personal imagination and wonder, the artist opts for indirect modes of expression by combining the materials into a new, unfamiliar shape, and in the encounter with this new creation, we are drawn out of or beyond our selves. Moral revisioning or transformation may be initiated by great art. If direct modes favor description, explanation, or analysis, indirect modes are more at home in the idioms of invented story, poetry, and paradox.

To interject a personal experience for the sake of illustration, one of the formative experiences of my childhood occurred when my Irish Catholic family visited the New York World's Fair in Queens in 1965. Michelangelo's Pietà was prominently on display in the Vatican Pavilion, and after standing in line for some time, we finally found ourselves in front of the sculpture. I recall several slow-moving conveyor-belt walkways set up in front of the masterpiece to keep the throngs moving at an appropriate pace, but there was also a stationary spot from which one could view the statue at some distance. I first filed by with my family and the crowd on the conveyor belt, getting a brief but close-up look at the exquisite white marble depicting a devastated mother bearing the corpse

of her adult son. As a twelve-year-old boy from central Massachusetts, I knew little or nothing about Michelangelo or the Italian renaissance, but I knew the story it evokes. Perhaps to the embarrassment of my parents, I found that I simply could not leave the presence of the Pietà after one quick pass. I felt drawn irresistibly into this horrific yet strangely serene otherworldly scene with a force beyond reason or will.

Without consulting my family, I quickly made my way to the stationary spot to extend my reverie after stepping off the conveyor. I do not recall how long I stood completely transfixed in a state of full concentration on the sculpture and absolutely nothing else, but it must have been several minutes, because I recall my father gently yet firmly urging, “It’s time to go, Tommy. Let’s go. We have to go, everyone’s waiting. There’s a lot more to see.” This is the kind of “non-conceptual,” “in the zone” experience that great works of art sometimes provoke, and my guess is that most readers have had similar experiences, perhaps with a work of art or in a wood, meadow, or by a stream, while others may have cultivated this kind of “pre-conceptual” or “non-conceptual” perception through meditation or prayer.

Given the dazzling achievements of digital technology and our increasing habituation to forms of communication that deliver simultaneously the experience and the commentary on it, it is not at all surprising that indirect modes of communication have fallen on hard times in our public discourse, schools, religion, and theology. Again for the sake of illustration, think of the way we typically exhibit and view great works of art. After paying the steep price of admission and thus feeling obligated to take in as much stimuli and information as possible, we purchase expert description, analysis, and interpretation recorded by art historians or docents, strap on our headsets and set off to follow the numbers on the wall or at least make sure that the number on the digital player corresponds to the number on the wall; a technological innovation intended to deliver a greater sense of agency and choice. This commentary is often excellent and may even enhance the experience, except perhaps when we begin to consider that the experience has been carefully marketed, managed, and mechanized, like the belts for conveying the masses past the Pietà in a timely fashion. Instead of feeling like a happy consumer freely exercising personal agency, suddenly we begin to feel more like the Charlie Chaplain character in “Modern Times” who is ground up by the gears of the machine he is working on. With all due respect to those in the art business who have to respond to market pressures, how can we

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expect to truly “see” a work of art when the “packaged experience” rules out adequate time for sight to leap to insight?

Clearly it is possible that fuller perception may occur in spite of marketing, management, and mechanization. And I confess that I have sometimes purchased the headsets out of a desire to “make the most” of the experience, but I have never survived a whole exhibit without tearing them from my head in exhaustion or frustration. The simple point is that great art, like the Pietà or the world of living things or the vast cosmos, has power to hypnotize, mesmerize, and lift us out of ourselves into a “non-conceptual” encounter. Since perception must be free for a genuinely personal encounter to occur, great art will always resist the sort of mechanization whose only goal is efficient consumption. Imagine how Rembrandt or Van Gogh would react if they could slip through time and see the multitudes of intense head-phoned consumers filing past their works on a Sunday afternoon, following dutifully the recordings and numbers, perhaps feeling like they really have gotten their money’s worth, yet having little chance of being drawn out of themselves and freed for wonder and vision.

Because they break new ground in the distinct traditions they inhabit, great mystics and great scientists share this “something extra” with the artists. In speaking of spiritual realities, the mystic commonly chooses the idiom of the *via negativa*. In speaking of material realities, the scientist most often announces a new theory in the language of higher mathematics. The *via negativa* and higher mathematics are both artistic means humanity has conceived to describe realities, the truth of which are verified by subsequent experience, in the first instance, and by subsequent experiment, in the second. Just as it would be folly for mystics with no knowledge of the higher mathematics to dismiss science as a pernicious illusion, it is equally ridiculous and unscientific for scientists with no knowledge of the *unio mystica* to dismiss religion as a pernicious illusion. Science and religion have both engendered salient and pernicious outcomes. But if we were able to agree on the deeper aesthetic convergence between the contributions of our greatest religious and scientific innovators, perhaps the rancorous debates between believers and atheists might cease.

Kagawa Toyohiko¹ (1888–1960) was a remarkable Japanese Christian

1. Japanese names are given with the family name first (Kagawa), followed by the given name (Toyohiko), except when they appear in some older English sources.

“scientific mystic,” artist, and moral innovator who perceived the cosmos as a great, unfolding drama, which requires the full effort and range of consciousness to be adequately appreciated. Embracing the discrete contributions of religion, science, and ethics, he believed that the dualism at the heart of post-Enlightenment thinking might be overcome by “seeing all things whole.” While honoring the theological traditions of the past, he also imagined religion, science, and ethics as partners in an unfolding and purposeful cosmic creation, which he believed was being propelled forward by the full consciousness and practice of the redemptive love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Espousing what he called “the eternally new religion of Life,” he boldly, albeit naively, proclaimed the end to the conflict between the science and religion.

Science as science has much to contribute to religion. Today, science itself is a great miracle. . . . The age for thinking science and religion are in conflict is a dream of the past. Through science, the eternally new religion of Life is able to participate in the great enterprise of the creation of the cosmos, which is greater than art.²

In spite of this optimism, he was not naïve about the discrete contributions of each enterprise, saying, “Faith teaches us about the fate of humanity, science teaches us about the structure of the universe. Those who fail to recognize this distinction can only end up in a great contradiction.”³

While some Japanese theologians have negatively characterized Kagawa’s approach as “poetic,” we believe, on the contrary, that it is precisely his intense artistic sensibility that makes his contribution so fascinating and important.

This once world-renowned evangelist, social reformer, interdisciplinary thinker, and writer lived through the agonizing modernization of Japan during the late Meiji (1868–1912), Taishō (1912–26), and early Shōwa (1926–89) eras. He was not an academic scholar who sits at a desk, reads research in a particular field, writes up lecture notes, and presents the latest iteration to tuition-paying students in a classroom. Rather, he was an evangelist for a faith that could bear the scrutiny of modernity, reading voraciously and often while scribbling notes for his next sermon, lecture, or negotiation. Like the cook we mentioned at the outset, he worked with what was “on hand,” guided more by his personal intuitions than

2. Kagawa, *Religion of Life and Art of Life*, 83–84.

3. Kagawa, *Meditations on God*, 5.

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by the “recipes” of tradition. Rather than focusing on academic peers in the same field, his message was addressed to an entire nation undergoing profound changes, and he meditated on the momentous issues of meaning and purpose facing modern societies everywhere.

KAGAWA’S STORY AS THE HISTORY OF MODERN JAPAN

Kagawa was the kind of “once in a generation” individual who is acutely sensitized to the perils and possibilities of the age in which they live. While Japan was forging a new identity and emerging as East Asia’s first modern nation state, the young Kagawa was struggling to find personal meaning and purpose in the wake of traumatic losses, illnesses, and experiences of shame. Eventually, after a gradual and painful spiritual transformation, he decided to dedicate himself to working with the weakest members of society, developing a heroic sense of vocation to build a humane modern society from the bottom up. In the process, he often proved himself willing to bear the hardest burdens and embody the highest hopes of an entire generation by focusing the powers of his intuition, intellect, and will on one extraordinarily lofty goal. He aspired to become a contemporary exemplar of Jesus Christ, translating his “redemptive love”⁴ into concrete action. While sometimes stumbling, from around 1920 until his death in 1960, Kagawa was at the center of every social, democratic, and ecumenical movement in Japan. One would have to look a long time to find a closer convergence of a person’s and a nation’s history.

James E. Loder, late Professor of the Philosophy of Christian Education at Princeton Theological Seminary, was fond of saying that genuine experiences of spiritual transformation belong not so much to the individual as to the church. But Kagawa would not limit his vision of redemptive love to the individual believer or even to the church, which is one of the reasons he often ran into conflict with established church leaders and theologians. Seeing Christ’s cross as the principle of “cosmic repair,” he saw its salvific effects extending beyond the individual Christian and the church, beginning with the weakest and forgotten members of society, and reaching out to embrace the entire cosmos. In the case of an epochal and prophetic figure like Kagawa, we think we are justified in expanding

4. 贖罪愛 *shokuzaiai*.

Loder's aphorism beyond the individual and the church to say that Kagawa's story belongs to the modern history of Japan and to all humanity.

Kagawa came of age as Japan was deep in the throes of an identity crisis brought on by the Meiji government's decision to pursue, with all haste, the twin goals of industrialization and militarization in imitation of the Western colonial and imperial powers. Edwin O. Reischauer describes this momentous decision of the Meiji oligarchs, who had managed to overthrow the long-reigning Tokugawa Shogunate with minimal violence.

Once in control of the national government, the new leaders naturally threw themselves into developing a more efficient national army and navy in close imitation of those of the contemporary West. This was only to be expected of men who were themselves for the most part military men by tradition and early training who had personally experienced the humiliation of being forced to bow to superior Western military might. They were understandably obsessed with the idea of creating a Japan capable of defending against the Occident. At the same time, however, they were surprisingly broad-minded in their approach to the problem, for they realized that to achieve military strength Japan also needed political, economic, social, and intellectual renovation. The concept was epitomized by the popular slogan *fukoku kyōhei*, "rich country, strong military."⁵

The new government seemed to be succeeding in mustering all of Japan's material and human resources in fashioning East Asia's first modern nation state and emergent global empire. Following the promulgation of its constitution in 1889 and the Imperial Rescript on Education in 1890,⁶ the creed into which all imperial subjects were indoctrinated from childhood, Japan swiftly marched on to defeat China's Qing Dynasty in 1895, overcome the Russian Navy at the Chinese port of Dalian (formerly Port Arthur) in 1904, and colonize the Korean Empire in 1910. In his interpretation of Japanese and Western approaches to nationalism, Matsumoto Sannosuke suggests:

Nationalism in Japan was very much the result of "external pressure" by which she was forced into the West-centered family of nations and which in turn caused her people to harbor strong fears and anxieties about their new contact with the alien world.⁷

5. Reischauer, *Japan*, 124–25.

6. See Appendix B.

7. Matsumoto, "Significance," 51.

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Kagawa was a brooding and bookish teenager just as his beloved homeland entered the new century with a growing conviction of its power and unique sense of destiny in Asia and the world. According to historian Kano Masanao, this transition from Meiji to Taishō was characterized by the huge problems and changes that came about as the nation “unavoidably harvested the immature fruit” of its successes.⁸ The slogan of the time was “change,” and Kano comments in regard to Kagawa’s best-selling novel *Before the Dawn*,⁹ “Both in terms of its title and style, this book symbolizes the turning point from late Meiji to Taishō.”¹⁰ Partly in response to the government’s top-down imposition of the new national identity, Kagawa and many of his generation were searching for personal, social, and ultimate purpose.

For Kagawa, the national crisis was accompanied by a succession of immensely painful personal traumas, which threatened and almost destroyed his own sense of identity. Having entered elementary school soon after the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, Kagawa belonged to the first generation reared in a spirit of absolute filial loyalty to the emperor as the inviolable spiritual father of the nation. This sense of love for the emperor persisted. For example, as Japan was rushing into war with China in the 1930s, the pacifist Kagawa was sharply critical of the militarists, on the one hand, but he never uttered or wrote a negative word about the emperor, on the other. Given this background, it is little wonder that he took on the nation’s fate as his own and saw his own fate as touching that of the nation.

As a philosophically-minded religious artist and evangelist, he creatively integrated the inherited philosophical and religious resources of Japan with his newly adopted Christian faith, and added the insights of natural science and personalist and vitalist trends in Western philosophy. Clearly favoring philosophy of religion and psychology over systematic theology, Kagawa boldly pursued an understanding of Christian faith that rang true to his personal experience and one he believed was most appropriate given the situation of the tiny Christian movement of Japan. While gifted with extraordinary curiosity and intellectual ability, Kagawa was drawn more toward the primary, intuitive apprehension of a prob-

8. Kano, *Undercurrent of Taishō Democracy*, 12. Kano reference from Kanai, “Practical Christian Ethos,” 135.

9. Kagawa, *Before the Dawn*.

10. Kano, *Undercurrent of Taishō Democracy*, 15.

lem than the secondary, detailed analysis of its constituent parts. His *in memoriam* for Nitobe Inazō beautifully captures the disposition Kagawa himself brought to his struggle to fashion a modern religious consciousness in the context of early-twentieth-century imperial Japan:

“The Eternal Youth,” by Kagawa Toyohiko
 Your distinct silhouette was huge, was it not?
 In your temperament a global spirit
 Permeated the way of the samurai
 That spirit a little too large
 To be confined to the islands of Japan
 With the years you become younger
 Such a delightful soul!
 From whence came such youthfulness?
 Forever admired eternal youth!¹¹

THE AD HOC ECLECTICISM OF KAGAWA’S WRITINGS

One of the reasons for the scarcity of academic work on Kagawa in English and even in Japanese is the peculiarity of his published writings, which appeared one book or pamphlet at a time during his lifetime, and were subsequently issued as the *Collected Works of Kagawa Toyohiko* in twenty-four volumes in 1964, and then reissued in 1973 and 1982. Since more than 300 writings bearing Kagawa’s name were published during his lifetime, the *Collected Works* is actually a selection.¹² Besides works he penned himself, the *Collected Works* include many transcriptions of his speeches, lectures, sermons, and interviews. There is naturally some stylistic disparity between Kagawa’s writings and the transcripts of his oral performances. While the latter may preserve the rhetoric of a specific occasion, these often hastily prepared records do not make for easy reading or analysis. This problem can be vexing to the reader since, on aggregate, they tend toward the inspirational, didactic, and aphoristic, and are often repetitious and lacking thematic development. The formidable task of making the entire corpus available, minus the countless redundancies, awaits the work of future researchers.

Unuma Hiroko, one exasperated but determined reader, offers some helpful comments on Kagawa’s style with special reference to *Cosmic Pur-*

11. Hamada, “Kagawa and Oceanic Civilization,” 64–65.

12. Kagawa, *Collected Works*. Only about twenty of Kagawa’s works, mainly novels and spiritual writings, were translated into English editions that are now out of print.

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pose (1958),¹³ Kagawa's final book and one that is a central focus of the present work:

We may next consider Kagawa's view of the cosmos through his representative *Cosmic Purpose*. At first glance this book gives the reader the impression of being a systematic construction, which mobilizes the latest philosophical thinking and scientific discoveries. Yet, quite to the contrary, it should more likely be read as a work that brings together findings from various fields into a system with an academic appearance, but actually offers a revelation of the cosmos based on Kagawa's mystical disposition. This may be said of Kagawa's writings as a whole. His primary sources are presented as subjects in the first-person, and even when the first-person is not used directly, they may be read as self-confirming confessions, which, rather than as academic writings, may be more appropriately read as verbal expressions of Kagawa's worldview inspired by mystical experience. This is the reason his writings have often been characterized as "poetic." As a result, if these writings are taken as a speculative, logical system, his real intention will either slip through one's fingers or lead to the kind of unfair assessments of Kagawa we have seen from time to time.¹⁴

Indeed, even though he was trained in the Reformed tradition that values the careful interpretation of texts, Kagawa never offers a point-by-point exegesis of his sources. It seems he had no interest in constructing a logical philosophical or theological system, yet his mind was a living sponge, speedily and critically absorbing into his meditations ideas from an astounding range of traditions and disciplines. On a surface reading, the writings can sometimes seem like a hodgepodge of contradictions and conundrums. However, extending Unuma's point, it is important for readers to recognize that Kagawa's use of the first person is completely resonant with the long tradition of Christian mystical writing. In her classic work on mysticism, Evelyn Underhill says:

Where the philosopher guesses and argues, the mystic lives and looks; and speaks, consequently, the disconcerting language of first-hand experience, not the neat dialectic of the schools.¹⁵

Because this "disconcerting language of first-hand experience" characterizes Kagawa's *ad hoc* and eclectic writings, it is futile to try to finally position his thinking within any single school of thought. Many tributaries

13. Kagawa, *Cosmic Purpose*.

14. Unuma, "The World of Faith of Kagawa Toyohiko," 196.

15. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 24.

flow into the broad river of the consciousness of this “mosaic artist for God.”¹⁶

But, as we will see, he did develop rather early on a holistic or comprehensive “worldview” or interpretive lens that emerged out of his early experiences of personal trauma, broad reading in the philosophy and psychology of religion and the natural sciences, and Christian meditations on the constitutive relations between (1) persons and ultimacy; (2) persons and the natural world; and (3) persons and other persons. For Kagawa, “seeing all things whole” meant always trying to hold together in consciousness the spiritual, embodied, and social dimensions of life within our incomprehensibly vast cosmos. Once a reader grasps Kagawa’s personalist, holistic, and ethical perspective, which we will present in chapter 2, what first appears as an unfocused hodgepodge becomes part of a dazzling, kaleidoscopic, religio-aesthetic vision.

We will now turn briefly to the story behind this unusual corpus. With the 1914 publication of *A Study of the Psychology of the Poor*,¹⁷ Kagawa’s major “empirical study” which became the subject of harsh criticism after his death, the Christian world in Japan began to learn of this idealistic young evangelist who in 1909 had suddenly departed his dormitory room at the Kōbe Theological School to take up residency in Shinkawa, Kōbe’s worst slum. A string of other writings followed, but in 1920 Kagawa was unexpectedly catapulted to national fame after the publication of *Before the Dawn*, his best-selling autobiographical novel. This tale of sorrow, soul-searching, intellectual hunger, Christian conversion, and calling to serve the poor captured the attention of the generation infected by the nascent reformist spirit of the Taishō era. Kagawa and his wife and co-worker Haru decided to donate the royalties from the novel to various social projects and movements,¹⁸ and the huge success of the novel encouraged Kagawa and his disciples to launch what soon became a cottage writing industry to support his expanding social projects.

With the founding the Kōbe Consumer Cooperative in 1920, the now-famous writer, evangelist, and reformer took on an increasingly visible, public role. For example, following a bitter ideological conflict with other

16. Robert Mikio Fukada, “Toyohiko Kagawa: A Mosaic Artist for God.”

17. Mutō reports that this work went through nine editions from 1914 to 1923. Mutō, “Commentary on *A Study of the Psychology of the Poor*,” 545. Kagawa has been rightly criticized for his use of clearly discriminatory language in this book. We return to this issue in chapter 3.

18. Hamada, “The Legacy of Kagawa Toyohiko.”

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labor movement leaders in 1921, he founded the *Pillar of Cloud* magazine and the Jesus Band Foundation in 1922, and the Friends of Jesus Society in 1923. Demands on his time further increased when he took on oversight of the relief work in Tokyo's Honjo district following the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. Kagawa was now much in demand and constantly on the move from one speaking engagement and negotiation to the next. Typically he was accompanied on these speaking tours by one of his so-called "Five Pens,"¹⁹ dedicated disciples who would transcribe and collate several speeches, lectures, or sermons before receiving Kagawa's final approval to send a new publication to press. In spite of this frenzy of activities, in the five years from 1920 to 1925, twenty-eight books and several translations were published under Kagawa's name. He was a force to be reckoned with, and contemporary international figures such as Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell met with him on their visits to Japan.

With the 1926 inauguration of the nationwide Kingdom of God Movement, which for several years required Kagawa to speak regularly at evangelistic meetings all over Japan, as well as an increase in invitations from abroad, he had less and less time left for his own writing. Besides the limitations of the heavy schedule, another factor that made writing more difficult was the sporadic recurrence of chronic trachoma, the blinding eye infection he had contracted in the Kōbe slum. Except for some periods of near blindness, he still managed to read with the help of a magnifying glass. Thus, thanks to the tireless efforts of his wife Haru and a growing number of disciples who watched over the work in Kōbe and Tokyo during his long absences, this best-selling novelist had become by default the head of a publishing house, which helped fund a broad range of projects serving his practical program for the reform of modern Japanese society.

To return to the writings, we should picture Kagawa reading, meditating, or jotting down notes on a train, a bus, a boat, or in the reception room of some public hall, school, or church, making last minute preparations and revisions for his next speaking event. While he always remained committed to his primary vocation as a Christian evangelist, his transcribed speeches in fact depict him as a "professorial" evangelist. His "congregation" or "classroom" was the general public, his "disciples" or "students" his fellow citizens. While an animated and inspiring speaker,

19. The "Five Pens" were three men, Kuroda Shirō, Murashima Yoriyuki, and Yoshida Genjirō, and two women, Imai Yone and Yoshimoto Takeko.



Kagawa lecturing

he would typically employ ink and brush on butcher-block paper to help introduce his more difficult concepts.

A voracious reader, he was especially passionate about the latest developments in natural science, religion, psychology, and philosophy, subjects he believed had both a universal and particular significance for his mostly non-Christian Japanese audiences. In spite of his efforts to explain how these broad interdisciplinary insights cohered with a relatively simple Christian message, his public speeches were sometimes incomprehensible, even to well-educated audiences. Historian Chō Takeda Kiyoko humorously recounts her impression of one of Kagawa's lectures.

When I was a student, we heard that the famous Christian, Kagawa Toyohiko, was coming to our school, so with throbbing hearts full of expectation, my friends and I went to hear the lecture. However, his unsystematic and rambling talk, which jumped around from biology to something resembling religious philosophy—all of which I simply could not fathom no matter how much I thought about it—left on me a deep impression of confusion about how on earth this person could be so famous!²⁰

This brings us back full circle to the *Collected Works*. We have discov-

20. Takeda, "Social Thought of Kagawa," 34.

Introduction

ered that a careful reading of Kagawa's writings on science, religion, and philosophy provides a key to understanding the apparently "unsystematic and rambling" leaps he makes in the public speeches. However fragmentary these written artifacts may appear at first glance, they are essential in understanding the genesis and development of his ideas. Hence, we have given priority to works written directly by Kagawa, while also sifting through the transcripts for portions that touch on the development of his views on science and religion up to *Cosmic Purpose* (1958), his last book.

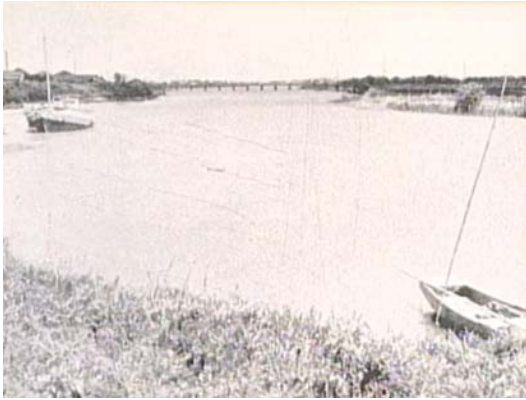
We have also consulted several out of print English translations of Kagawa's works, comparing them with the Japanese originals, making revisions that seem warranted, and have considered a broad range of relevant secondary literature in Japanese and English. Not surprisingly, academic work on Kagawa is more abundant in Japanese than in English. We have translated relevant passages from Japanese into English, thus making some of this literature available to an English-speaking public for the first time. Our goal throughout has been to offer a balanced, critical appraisal of one of the most remarkable, complex, and still relevant religious figures of the twentieth century.

While this book is a kind of intellectual biography and does open with an introductory chapter on Kagawa's early development, we will focus specifically on his perspective on the relation between science and religion, a theme that has not been adequately addressed in previous work. Since his views on the subject were pretty much established by the end of the Taishō Era (1926), the biographical material presented in chapter 1 focuses on several relevant episodes from Kagawa's childhood, youth, and young adulthood. To English readers who want a more comprehensive account of Kagawa's life and achievements,²¹ we recommend Robert Schildgen's *Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice*. For those who can read Japanese, we recommend Amemiya Eiichi's recent three-volume biography, which lays important new groundwork on the genesis and development of Kagawa's thought and practice. With a special debt of gratitude to Schildgen, Amemiya, and other biographers, we now turn to events in his early life where we will explore the roots of his "scientific mysticism" as a uniquely situated "laboratory" where we see the development and testing of a unique religious consciousness that was a response to personal anxieties and potentials and those of the modern age.

21. See Appendix A for timeline of some of the main events in Kagawa's life.

Finally, a brief biographical note on the author is in order. From 1988 to 2008, Thomas John Hastings was a Mission Co-worker of the Presbyterian Church (USA), working in cooperation with the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ or Kyōdan). He taught at Hokuriku Gakuin Junior College in Kanazawa from 1987 to 1991, Seiwa College in Nishinomiya from 1993 to 1995, and Tokyo Union Theological Seminary from 1995 to 2008. He was a Senior Academic Administrator from 2008 to 2011 and the Houston Witherspoon Fellow in Theology and Science at the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton from 2011 to 2012. After Furuya Yasuo, Koyama Kōsuke, and Morimoto Anri, he was the first non-Japanese to be invited to give the Kagawa Lecture at Princeton Theological Seminary in April, 2011. In 2012, upon receiving a three-year grant from the John Templeton Foundation called “Advancing the Science & Religion Conversation in Japan,” he was appointed Senior Research Fellow in Science & Religion at the Japan International Christian University Foundation in New York City. With the exception of Kagawa’s final work, *Cosmic Purpose*, which was translated by James W. Heisig and edited by the author, he is responsible for all of the translations from Japanese in this volume.

1 Discovering the Holy in the Midst of the Void



A CHILD OF THE YOSHINO RIVER BASIN

Any attempt to understand Kagawa's "scientific mysticism" must include his difficult childhood and youth as well as his later remembrances of those days. In 1955, just as he was working hard to complete his teleological meditation on modern science, *Cosmic Purpose* (1958), the sixty-six year-old Kagawa wrote a short autobiographical piece called "Leaving My Village" that recounts some of his earliest memories up through his student days at Meiji Gakuin and the Kōbe Theological School. Mutō Tomio, the editor of Kagawa's collected works, reports that following the war, Kagawa was preoccupied with writing his teleology.¹ In a memorial tribute appearing in *Christian Century* in 1960, Richard Drummond comments on Kagawa's post-war public speeches:

An outstanding characteristic of Kagawa's postwar preaching was his frequent use of illustrations drawn from natural science, a trait mani-

1. Mutō, Commentary on *Cosmic Purpose*, 455.

festing his lifelong deep interest in that subject. Some of his addresses seemed 75 percent science and 25 percent gospel. In this he was poles apart from standard practice in the biblically oriented preaching of the Japanese church and as a consequence was often severely criticized. Kagawa's wide knowledge of natural science, especially astronomy, physics and biology, reached levels rare in nonspecialists. . . . He was certainly the only man in Japan who on the basis of serious study made an attempt to apply scientific knowledge to the understanding and proclamation of Christian gospel.²

So committed was he to bringing science and religion into positive rapprochement that he even rejected an invitation from a major U.S. publisher to write his autobiography in English. A 1954 letter from Eugene Exman, editor and manager of religious books at Harper & Brothers, reads:

Dear Dr. Kagawa: While I am sorry that you have decided not to write your autobiography, I am pleased to know that you are putting aside time regularly to write your book *The Purpose of the Universe* [here translated *Cosmic Purpose*]. I am eager to talk to you about the manuscript and hope to see you in Evanston. Sincerely, Eugene Exman.³

Given this post-war "obsession," it is reasonable to conclude that the keenly self-conscious Kagawa intentionally focuses on certain life episodes he recalls in "Leaving My Village," as a way of disclosing the development of his quest for what we have called his "cosmic synthesis," a lifelong pursuit that reached its zenith in *Cosmic Purpose*.⁴ This is why we have used this autobiographical piece, previously unknown in the English literature, to structure this chapter. Since what autobiographers omit is often as revealing as what they include, we have supplemented Kagawa's retelling in "Leaving My Village" with other primary and secondary sources. Also, to help interpret the convergence of psychological and spiritual trajectories in Kagawa's personal story, we have drawn on the work of James E. Loder.⁵

The first section of "Leaving My Village" is called "A Complicated Family," and it begins with a passing reference to what was surely the most painful and enduring trauma of his life.

While I was lonely, I am grateful that I grew up in Awa's Yoshino River

2. Drummond, "Kagawa: A Christian Evangelist," 824–25.

3. Eugene Exman, letter to Kagawa, 23 April 1954.

4. Kagawa, *Cosmic Purpose*.

5. Loder, *Logic of the Spirit*.

Basin. There I spent the great bulk of the most sensitive period of youth. After the death of both my parents when I was four years old, my stepmother took me in, but the person who cared for me was my step grandmother.⁶

These poignant opening lines suggest that, even in the midst of his bleak sense of abandonment after losing both parents at such an early age, he was discovering or constructing an alternative identity and sense of belonging as a child of nature. More than simply a geographical homeland, the Yoshino and its environs provided the lonely young boy a sheltering matrix, a home or “motherland,” which his adopted family was unable to provide. On the banks of this river, he first intuited the probability of a “cosmic synthesis” between the mutable, material realm of nature and the immutable, spiritual realm of purpose.

But his early reveries by the banks of the Yoshino were not by any measure all bliss and romance. In spite of the natural beauty, he perceived a dark shadow that enveloped his adopted home life and the entire village community, as he points out in *The Religion of Jesus and its Truth* (1921):

Everything was covered in a feeling of moral corruption. Even the serene blue water of the beautiful Yoshino River could not make a human heart serene. From early on, I was a child of sorrow.⁷

Before returning to this growing tension between his sense of gratitude for the matrix of nature, moral apprehension about his surroundings, and spiritual longing, we need to insert a brief word about his birth parents.

At the age of four, Toyohiko suffered in quick succession the double trauma of the deaths of his father, Kagawa Jun'ichi, and Kaō Kame, his birth mother and father's concubine. Born into the Isobe family, who owned a sake brewing company, Jun'ichi had been adopted by the wealthier Kagawa clan, according to a custom common at the time, because they lacked a male heir. During the Tokugawa Era, the Kagawa clan had control of nineteen neighboring villages, so their social and economic standing in Awa society was quite high. As one of the benefits of his adoption, Jun'ichi had received a Confucian-style education, which combined literary and military arts, at the Chōkyūkan, an elite school for the male children of local samurai clans. He had also worked as a government official before opening a shipping company in Kōbe.⁸

6. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 91.

7. Kagawa, *Religion of Jesus and its Truth*, 135.

8. Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko's Youth*, 37–40.

Seeing All Things Whole



Kagawa Jun'ichi



Kaō Kame

According to Amemiya, there is some basis for thinking that Kame, Kagawa's mother, had also been born into a samurai family from Kishū⁹ who presumably had been forced to send her into the *geisha* world after falling on hard times.¹⁰ But whatever her origins, Kame did manage to find expression for her considerable talents and learning as Jun'ichi's wife, contributing to his business, for example, by teaching company clerks how to read and write.¹¹ There is every indication that Kame and Jun'ichi provided Toyohiko and his siblings a stable, comfortable, and loving home.

But this world disappeared forever when the forty-four-year-old Jun'ichi died on November 19, 1892, apparently from influenza or dysentery. Schildgen also hints at other possible causes for Jun'ichi's death, saying "drinking and high living may have been contributing factors."¹² Kame died less than seven weeks later on January 3, 1893, soon after the birth of her fifth child. Amemiya comments, "Soon after Jun'ichi died at the young age of forty-four, overwhelmed by sadness and deciding to follow after him, the unfortunate woman died at the young age of thirty-seven."¹³ As a concubine, Kame had no rights of inheritance, thus beside the emotional trauma of Jun'ichi's death, she was also facing the likelihood of financial ruin. Whatever her actual psychological condition at the time of his mother's death, one can only imagine the young Toyohiko's anguish as

9. A district in modern day Wakayama and Mie Prefectures.

10. Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko's Youth*, 36–40.

11. *Ibid.*, 40.

12. Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 11.

13. Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko's Youth*, 40.

he tried to come to terms with the sudden loss of his mother, and so soon after his father's death. Recent research suggests that the trauma of losing a parent early in life may be moderated somewhat by the sense of safety and support provided by a loving family,¹⁴ but having lost both parents at once, Kagawa had no such good fortune. His adolescent experience of suicidal ideation, which we will touch on below, is probably not unrelated to the untimely death of his parents. These losses were a personal apocalypse for Kagawa, opening up an early awareness of the void that haunts human life.¹⁵

Soon after his mother's death, Toyohiko and his older sister were accompanied by one of the clerks of the family shipping company from Kōbe to the family home in Ōasa Village, Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture, an area formerly called Awa, which is located in the northeast of the island of Shikoku. In *Before the Dawn*, his autobiographical novel, the "Kagawa character" Niimi Eiichi¹⁶ loses his concubine mother as a ten year old. Depicting the departure from Kōbe for Tokushima, he says, "He [Niimi] still recalled his elder sister and himself standing on the deck of the steamer. His thoughts passed to the dark gloomy house where death had separated him from his mother."¹⁷

From the "dark gloomy house" of separation in Kōbe, Kagawa moved into what he later referred to as "a big house without love."¹⁸ In this way, both the past and future seemed shrouded in a foreboding sense of negation.

14. See Ellis et al., "The Long-term Impact of Early Parental Death," 57–67, and Cas et al., "The Impact of Parental Death on Child Well-being."

15. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*. The Sartre reference is from Loder, *The Logic of the Spirit*, 124. The possibility of a correlation between severe emotional trauma and dramatic religious conversion seems indicated in some classical stories of conversion (i.e., Luther and Kierkegaard) and calls for closer scientific investigation. See Fleming, "Sensing God's Presence."

16. The Chinese characters for this name are 新見 *Niimi*, literally meaning "new sight," and 栄一 *Eiichi*, literally meaning "glory first." As Amemiya points out in his criticism of Mutō's approach to the novel, it is important to recall that, even though it is an "autobiographical" novel, it is nonetheless a fiction and therefore should not be used to establish historical facts. I refer to it only when it illuminates an established biographical detail. See Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko and the Poor*, 13–16.

17. Kagawa, *Before the Dawn*, 37. In a letter to a Japanese friend, the Irish poet W. B. Yeats praises this translation of Kagawa's best-seller, saying, "I have also read Toyohiko Kagawa's novel ... translated into English under the title *Before the Dawn*, and find it about the most moving account of a modern saint that I have met." See Oshima, *W. B. Yeats and Japan*.

18. Schildgen, *Toyohiko Kagawa*, 11.

While he does acknowledge the positive role of his rather strict step-grandmother Sei in his upbringing, he reports that his stepmother Michi hated him. This alleged aversion of Jun'ichi's legal wife toward the child of her husband's concubine is hardly surprising, but it is also likely Kagawa felt some disdain for her in return, as we see in the following recollection. "My stepmother had a weak constitution and was always sleeping in the large *tatami* room at the back of the house."¹⁹ As a fascinating counterpoint, in *Before the Dawn*, the Kagawa character Eiichi expresses genuine compassion for his stepmother and strongly criticizes his father for behaving "heartlessly" and "burying the poor woman alive."²⁰ In "Leaving My Village," Kagawa adds an interesting epilogue to this tortuous story, saying, "After I became an adult, we took care of this stepmother who had despised me, and she requested that I baptize her."²¹ Perhaps in Michi's baptism they both were able to finally find some healing of their mutual antipathy.

Turning again to his identification with the natural world and fascination with living things, Kagawa recounts a visit he had made to Kōbe where his older brother had taken over responsibility for the family business. A day trip to the Natural History Museum and Aquarium in Wadamisaki left a particularly strong impression. As soon as he returned home to Tokushima, Toyohiko found a large earthenware *suribachi* that had been abandoned in the garden. After securing Sei's permission to use the big pot as an aquarium, he filled it with water and secured it in place by building around it a mound of dirt. Each day he would go off to the nearby canal or rice fields to catch prawns, carp, pond snails, and killifish, carefully taking home his quarry and releasing them into this improvised aquarium. He also raised katydids and a meadow bunting he had received from his school friend Shotarō. He remarks, "In the morning and evening I enjoyed being alone with these small animals. I think my lifelong avocation for biological research was a gift of my loneliness."²²

While this connection between "loneliness" and "biological research" may not be immediately obvious, it seems reasonable to assert that these little creatures, which he was free to nurture in the safe space of the gar-

19. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 92–93.

20. Kagawa, *Before the Dawn*, 149.

21. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 92–93.

22. *Ibid.*, 96.

den, functioned for the traumatized boy as “transitional objects” or proxies for the absent mother-child bond.²³ Stressing the “mediating power” of such “transitional objects,” Loder says that they have

an almost “sacred quality” and power to bestow security and peace when nothing else will. . . .

They are the creations of the human spirit, symbolically combining the known and the unknown, the familiar present state of being and the emerging new state. They therefore deal symbolically with the primal sense of emptiness echoing back to birth that now surrounds the first intentional move away from the mother to a new state of being.²⁴

Kagawa had not only experienced the “primal sense of emptiness” of separation from his mother at birth, but also the absolute separation of her death. These two negations were aggravated further by the alleged inability of his adopted family to provide adequate surrogate care. Hence, the creatures in the garden opened up the possibility of a new kind of maternal bond that rooted him body and spirit to the Yoshino River basin and its environs. As we will see, this sense of being linked to the matrix of the natural world gradually expanded to include the entire cosmos, reaching all the way out to the cosmic dust and the stars, contracting all the way in to the atomic and subatomic levels, embracing every level of reality in between, and touching even on his ultimate sense of union with the cosmic will, nothingness, or God. In the section on the “transitional object,” Loder inserts a theological comment that seems applicable to Kagawa’s situation:

In the theological area, we also need a concrete image to enable us to make the ultimate transition from this life through death into a resurrected life. That is, what we need is One whose very existence takes both sides seriously and unites in His person the space we must traverse.²⁵

While Kagawa makes a lot of his loneliness as a child, we should note that not all of his memories were gloomy. For example, he happily recalls that his friend Shotarō’s grandfather, Sadakichi, showed them how to make *zōri* (straw sandals), birdcages, and traps for capturing small birds. He also took them fishing for mullet in the river and taught them the

23. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 1–25.

24. Loder, *Logic of the Spirit*, 133–34.

25. *Ibid.*, 134.

chant-like *jōruri* that accompanies Bon dances during the mid-August Buddhist festival commemorating the ancestors. Kagawa says,

When summer came, we would go swimming in the Mazume River, a tributary of the Yoshino, and I remember jumping off the ferryman's small boat. I was able to fully enjoy the benefits of Mother Nature.²⁶

Thus, while the rivers, fields, and his beloved pets provided Kagawa an umbilical-like link back to the source of life after the loss of his parents, he also seems to have found genuine human companionship in Shotarō and Sadakichi. In one of his last writings that appeared just four months before he died, the ailing Kagawa recalls going fishing with Sadakichi and comments on how he discovered the Creator through his sense of intimacy with the natural world:

Ishibashi Sadakichi-san was a kind man who lived just to the west of us. He taught me how to fish and care for small birds. The local elementary school did not teach me, but Sadakichi-san took me by the hand and taught me. He showed me how to bend the fishing pole, place the worm on the hook, and throw the line into the river. Because of this, I really liked Sadakichi-san. While I had been born in the port city of Kōbe, I grew up from the natural inspiration of Awa's Yoshino River. Having spent my childhood years there from four to eleven, I still believe that the best way to come to perceive God is through nature.

The Yoshino River is one of the rare, beautiful rivers of Japan. There is surely no more beautiful river in Japan. Even in the Western world, I'm sure there are not many rivers so beautiful as the Yoshino. Hence, in Tokyo and Osaka, I have promoted the movement to expose children to nature. I completely agree with Rousseau, the writer of *Emile*, who advocated a return to nature as the basis of education. Having been brought up in a farming community, I truly enjoyed nature. Because I knew life in a rural village, I could easily understand the Creator. Japan is not doing a good job of introducing its children to the beauties of nature. The mission of Japan's Sunday Schools is not to teach the Bible in a complicated way, but to teach honestly about nature through the Bible. The discovery of the Creator is the beginning of wisdom. I discovered the Creator as a fifteen year-old. This was the greatest discovery of my entire lifetime.²⁷

26. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 97.

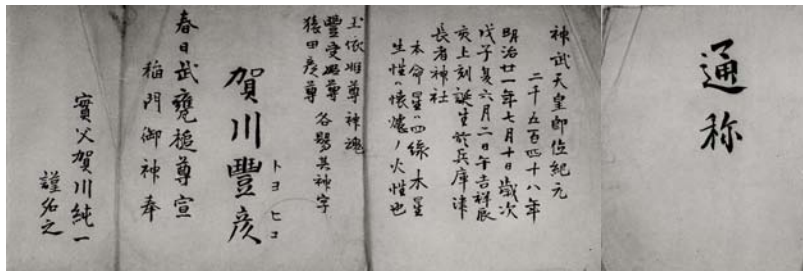
27. Kagawa, "Fishing," 560.

RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, MORAL AMBIGUITY,
AND *HOMO RELIGIOSUS*

Since the Japanese religious and philosophical heritage plays such an important role in the development of Kagawa's thinking, we need to touch briefly on this aspect of his early socialization. Firstly and perhaps most importantly, his father had carefully chosen the two Chinese characters for his given name Toyohiko from two Shintō deities, Toyouke and Sarutahiko,²⁸ who are enshrined at the Ōsahiko Shrine, three villages removed from the Kagawa family home. Amemiya says Jun'ichi was devoted to these local deities,²⁹ who also feature in the ancient Japanese mythology. Toyouke appears in the *Kojiki* and Sarutahiko appears in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*,³⁰ the two eighth-century classics on the mythological roots of Japan and the imperial family. Regarding his father's faith, Kagawa reports he had "abandoned Buddhism and became a Shintoist."³¹

It was surely not an insignificant fact for the young Kagawa, especially after losing both parents, that he had been given a noble Japanese name that was both a link with his father's personal faith and the august mythological origins of the imperial family. In addition to being nurtured as a loyal subject of the emperor, his name may help account for the fact that, while Kagawa opposed Japan's militarism and the government's manipulation of State Shintō, he only had positive words for the emperor and the imperial family.

In Tokushima, his step grandmother, Sei, took it upon herself to guide his early training and reinforce his identity as the "precocious child" of an



Jun'ichi's Handwritten Certificate Declaring Toyohiko's Name

28. 豊受 *Toyouke* and 猿田彦 *Sarutahiko*, hence Kagawa's name 豊彦 *Toyohiko*.

29. Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko's Youth*, 51.

30. 『古事記』 *Kojiki* and 『日本書紀』 *Nihonshoki*.

31. Kagawa, *Christ and Japan*, 104.

elite family. She regularly prodded the young Toyohiko to follow closely in the footsteps of his father, saying, “Since your father was attached to the government, you must also study hard and become a great man.”³² The young boy surely felt the burden of being chosen to fill his late father’s shoes and bear the Kagawa name into the future with dignity. As an example of Sei’s training, each day as classes let out at his elementary school and the other children were free to run home to play, Toyohiko was sent to Shōin-ji,³³ a local Zen Buddhist Temple, to study the Chinese Confucian classics (*kangaku*). Sei knew that the study of the *kangaku* was an essential fixture in the nurture of elite young men. Toyohiko recalls feeling cheated because he was not allowed to play after school, but later he expressed a sense of remorse that he had read the Chinese characters with little understanding of their meaning as a boy.³⁴

Not only was Kagawa among the first generation to be indoctrinated into the modern education system, which was centered on the filial piety of all imperial subjects, he was also among the last generation to study the *kangaku*, a longstanding educational institution that had continued into the early Meiji Era but gradually disappeared by the mid-1890s with the ascendancy of the new pedagogies and subjects of study imported from the modern West.³⁵ He reports, “The priest taught me carefully in one on one tutorials,” but he also admits he could only partially grasp the meaning of the *Analects* of Confucius while being baffled by Mencius’s *Doctrine of the Mean*.³⁶ Nevertheless, he does acknowledge that the Confucian teaching formed the basis of his understanding of right and wrong, saying, “I did accept Confucianism as a legalistic code of conduct, for, as a system, it is more legalistic even than the Mosaic law.”³⁷ Later as a student at Meiji Gakuin, he reread Mencius and was deeply impressed by his philosophy of life. Eventually, like some other Japanese converts to Christianity, he came to be attracted to the ethical idealism of Wang Yangming (1472–1529), a neo-Confucian reformer whose work had been introduced in Japan by Nakae Tōju (1608–48). At any rate, Kagawa had tasted both the old and new pedagogies of Japan.

Kagawa reports that Sei was a very religious person, saying, “My own

32. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 94.

33. 正因寺 (臨濟宗妙心寺派).

34. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 95.

35. Mehl, “Chinese Learning,” 48–66.

36. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 95.

37. Kagawa, *Christ and Japan*, 104.

childhood faith was deeply implanted in me by my step-grandmother.”³⁸ He recounts an incident when his whole elementary school had to solemnly accompany the body of a young soldier who had been killed in the Russo-Japanese War to the local crematorium, saying, “At that moment, I felt keenly the sorrow of war.”³⁹ He speaks of visiting a nearby Buddhist temple with his friend Shotarō to commemorate the festival for Kūkai or Kōbō Daishi (774–835), the renowned monk and scholar who founded the *Shingon* school of Buddhism to which the Kagawa family belonged.⁴⁰

From childhood, he participated in the daily rituals before the *butsudan*, the Buddhist family altar for commemorating the ancestors. Recounting that daily ritual in 1938, he says:

as the leading clan in the village, many ancient traditions concerning the family had been passed down to us; and on the *butsudan* was an array of memorial tablets inscribed with *kaimyō* (posthumous names), granted by priests after death to various members of my family. It was my duty from the time I was six or seven years of age to place an offering before these tablets every morning before breakfast. I remember how I would enter the darkened room, light the candles on the *butsudan*, place the offering before the tablets, strike the bell, and then hurry back, for when I struck the bell, a wave of fear, which should be called a fear of death, would sweep over me, and I would be breathless from terror.⁴¹

Finally, he tells of a long New Year’s Day pilgrimage to the Ōasahiko Shintō Shrine, the place from which his father had taken the name Toyohiko. Kagawa also touches these early memories in the fictional *Before the Dawn*:

He passed the grove surrounding the shrine of the tutelary deity and remembered when he was a young boy how he used to beat the drum at the festival while the young men did the lion dance. This again reminded him that at the children’s festival he had himself one year been the leader. He remembered that he and a lot of other children slept at the shrine and had great fun.⁴²

38. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 97.

39. *Ibid.*, 97.

40. 真言 *Shingon*, meaning “True Word.” Devotion to both Shintō and Buddhist faiths is still considered normative in Japan, reflecting the so-called *shinbutsu shūgō* (神仏習合), or merging of the two faiths.

41. Kagawa, *God and the Inspiration of Redemptive Love*, 376.

42. Kagawa, *Before the Dawn*, 62.

Seeing All Things Whole

From all of this, it is clear that his step-grandmother carefully introduced Kagawa to Shintō and Buddhist religious practices and Confucian ethical teachings in keeping with the customs of privileged rural families. Baptist missionary and Kagawa associate and biographer William Axling describes the effect of these formative experiences:

Like all the promising boys of that time he was regularly sent to the Buddhist temple to study the Confucian classics and to be drilled in the fundamentals of Buddhist faith. From the Confucian classics he learned the commanding place that filial piety and patriotic loyalty has in the thought-life of his people, and through the Buddhist teachings and its elaborate ritual there was nurtured in his boyish soul a sense of mystic awe and quiet reverence which has become habitual and controlling through the years.⁴³

Nevertheless, as he matured he became increasingly critical of the gap he observed between these religious and ethical ideals and the actualities of life in the family and the village. In *God and the Inspiration of Redemptive Love* (1938), he describes the situation in terms of a relation between the family's wealth, a lack of discipline, and lax morals.

My family and relatives were all wealthy. They owned large factories for the manufacture of indigo dye, and even in the farming villages the people lived comfortably. But because of this, the village was very corrupt and moral standards very low. One can understand how foul with lust the atmosphere was from the fact that at age six or seven I was taught to sing the vulgar love songs of the dancing girls in the brothels. Things were so bad that, even as a boy of nine or ten, and lacking any means of self-discipline or training, I could not but notice the laxity in morals.⁴⁴

In "Leaving My Village," he similarly recalls:

There was a high degree of sexual excitement among the male youth of our village, and I am embarrassed to say that from childhood I was numbered among them. Until a religious education in sexual morality that fears the Creator is thoroughly introduced in the farming villages, I am afraid this kind of custom cannot be uprooted.⁴⁵

Recalling that his father, after losing a child with his legal wife Michi, had purchased his concubine mother Kame when she was about twenty-years

43. Axling, *Kagawa*, 7.

44. Kagawa, *God and the Inspiration of Redemptive Love*, 382.

45. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 97.

old, he adds that his older brother was an “unmanageable profligate.”⁴⁶ Given this family history, Toyohiko feared that he, too, may “be led away into a future of which no one could predict the outcome.”⁴⁷ Lacking the presence of an adult male in his immediate family, Kagawa was left to struggle on his own with his nascent sexual desires and other adolescent issues. Perhaps as a residue of this moral identity crisis, his writings abound with an unresolved tension between the ideal and the actual.

But there is one particularly painful experience that Kagawa felt compelled to recall in significant detail in “Leaving My Village.” According to the sixty-six year-old, the daughter of the janitor at the nearby Nakaumezume Elementary School had fallen from the top of a waterwheel and, as a consequence of her injuries, had developed pleurisy that required her to be bedridden for several months. One day in the summer of 1898, the ten-year-old Kagawa went to the elementary school grounds with some friends to play, and by then the janitor’s daughter was up out of bed and playing there with some of her friends. Glaring at Kagawa and his companions from behind a wooden fence, the girl and her friends reportedly starting taunting the boys, asserting they had no business being there since Nakaumezume was not their school. Kagawa says, “Since I was class monitor in the third class at Ushiyajima Upper Elementary, I paid no attention to them at first. However, when their abuse became excessive, I lightly jabbed the girl with the end of my umbrella and she ran off crying to the house near the school.”⁴⁸ After two weeks had passed, the girl suddenly started saying that Kagawa had “meant to stab her to death.” We will quote at length the most painful part of Kagawa’s retelling of this agonizing tale.

I was then ordered by my step grandmother to go to the girl’s house to apologize, so withdrawing from my post office account all of the money I had been saving for years, I put on my summer coat and set off.

I lamented for two days and nights without sleep. In my entire life, I had never been so sad. I had no recollection of poking that first grade girl hard enough to kill her. I knew she had been bedridden with pleurisy for some time. When her sickness became even worse and she started to pin her troubles on me, I truly regretted ever returning to this rural district of Awa. The people of the village knew

46. Kagawa, *God and the Inspiration of Redemptive Love*, 382–83.

47. *Ibid.*, 383.

48. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 98.

Seeing All Things Whole

very well that I was the child of my father's concubine, and I also knew that they would be delighted to see me stumble.

While I knew I was innocent of any wrongdoing, I withdrew 5 yen from my postal savings account, and wrapping it in an envelope, went to the janitor's house to apologize.

Deciding never to return to the village again, I got permission from my step-grandmother for my older brother Tanitsu to accompany me to Kōbe.

While I was away in Kōbe, the girl died as a result of the pleurisy. The grandmother next door said, "You were falsely accused because they could not afford to pay for her medicine."⁴⁹

Commenting on this tragedy in *Before the Dawn*, he says, "Nothing was more painful than being misconceived by others."⁵⁰

This ominous event seems to have been a pivotal turning point in Kagawa's development as *homo religiosus*, a term used by Erik Erikson to refer to figures in whom "religiosity has become definitive for the totality of their lives."⁵¹ At this stage in his development, Kagawa had already experienced the horrific loss of both parents. If our analysis is correct, this trauma was moderated, even if not completely healed, by his sense of being soothed by the river environs and by caring for his menagerie of animals. But now he was afflicted by thoughts of this false rumor spreading among the already inhospitable villagers. Complicated by the maddening experience of being forced to take the fall for a wrong he had not committed, this experience produced a heightened sense of unresolved shame, resentment, and injustice in the young boy, as evidenced by his longing to escape his father's village and never return.

This event seems to have taken on a dramatic, totalizing weight for Kagawa, and we might compare it with similar paternal struggles experienced by Martin Luther or Søren Kierkegaard. Whereas Luther felt he had betrayed his authoritarian father's expectations of him to study law, Kierkegaard worried he had inherited a family curse because his father had allegedly cursed God.⁵² Because of the false accusation that had spread like wildfire through his father's home village, Kagawa lost any hope of ever filling his father's shoes and restoring the family name, which had already been tarnished by gossip about the real causes of Jun'ichi's early

49. *Ibid.*, 99.

50. Kagawa, *Before the Dawn*, 63.

51. Loder, *Logic of the Spirit*, 231.

52. *Ibid.*, 234–47.

death and aggravated by the presence of his concubine's son. Feeling he had betrayed the expectations of his deceased father—expectations that were repeatedly communicated to him by his adopted family—the pre-teen's past seemed haunted by abandonment and death and his future by shame and despair.

As a way of escaping the local village, he was admitted to the Tokushima Middle School⁵³ a year early, after fudging his date of birth on the application. Since the school was a significant distance from his village, he moved into the school's dormitory. Next, when his elder brother's poor management and intemperance led the family into bankruptcy, Kagawa's intense feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and shame must have been exacerbated by the further public disgrace of the family's financial collapse. As a result, he was forced to spend some time with a distant relative before his uncle finally stepped in and took over tuition payments at the Tokushima Middle School. Looking back, he said, "I just barely managed to graduate."⁵⁴ In his final year at Tokushima, he published a notable scientific essay on crabs, which we will mention in chapter 3.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM AND IDEOLOGICAL FORMATION

In his third year at Tokushima Middle School, Kagawa enrolled in English classes taught by Charles Logan and Harry Meyers, two missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern Presbyterian) who had planted a church in the city. In *Brotherhood Economics* (1936), his Rauschenbusch Lectures delivered at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in April 1936, he recalls this encounter:

There was an American missionary who taught English, so I attended that English class to learn the language. He told me the best way to learn English was to memorize it and gave me a few verses from the Sermon on the Mount to memorize. I also learned the twenty-seventh verse of the third chapter of Luke, "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." When I began to memorize that verse a new inspiration came to me. This time I found that there is a most mysterious power which makes the plants so beautiful. This power

53. Middle schools followed lower, or ordinary, and upper elementary schools, functioning as the equivalent of today's high schools.

54. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 101.

is the Creator. So I began to pray to the Heavenly Father who could make the lilies in the field so pretty. I believed that if I could be like one of these lilies in the field I could be a good boy.⁵⁵

While he had been introduced to Christianity by a Christian teacher named Katayama, who taught at the middle school and ran a dormitory where Kagawa had lived briefly, he says that his “discovery of God was due completely to these two missionaries,”⁵⁶ Meyers and Logan. The fifteen-year-old Kagawa was baptized on 21 February 1904.

In “Leaving My Village,” he goes on to list some of the books that had helped shape his ideological views before and after entering Meiji Gakuin. His reading list begins with Tolstoy: “After receiving baptism, I felt very encouraged and started studying. One book that deeply inspired me at the time was *A Confession* by Tolstoy. Tolstoy helped to guide the direction of my inner life from that point on. The Russo-Japanese War had already started. But I believed in Tolstoy’s pacifism and did not feel any excitement about Japan’s success in that war.”⁵⁷

Kagawa’s public expression of his pacifist convictions are traceable to a dramatic incident that had occurred at Tokushima Middle School soon after his baptism, when he had refused to participate in military training exercises. The government had directed all Japanese schools to hold military training exercises, but one day before these exercises were to begin, Kagawa suddenly blurted out, “I refuse to go to training!” and dropped his training gun in protest, at which point the teacher conducting the exercise reportedly threw Kagawa to the ground. In spite of this extraordinary confrontation with his teacher, Kagawa allegedly still refused to pick up his gun.⁵⁸ This public act of protest is all the more significant when one considers Japan was at war and public opinion was not in the least bit hospitable to expressions of anti-war sentiment.

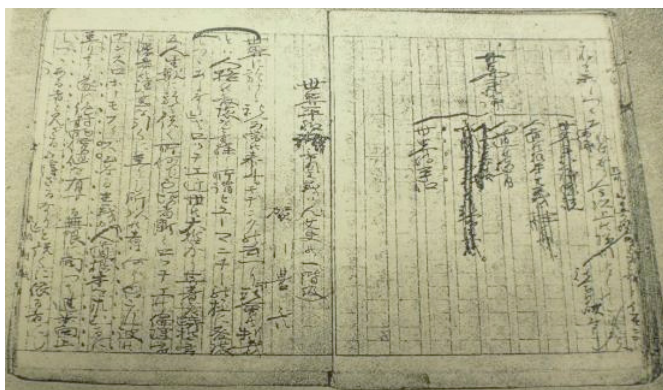
Given the highly charged political atmosphere of the day, it is almost as if the teenage Kagawa imagined he could single-handedly foil the emerging imperialist ambitions of his beloved Japan. Describing the “heightened sense of totality” that accompanies adolescent leaps in cognitive and ego development, Loder says, “The ideological hunger of this

55. Kagawa, *Brotherhood Economics*, 9.

56. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 102.

57. *Ibid.*, 102. It bears mentioning that Kagawa wrote “Leaving My Village” in 1955 after already being nominated once for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1954. He was subsequently nominated in 1955, 1956, and 1960.

58. Amemiya, *Kagawa Toyohiko’s Youth*, 157.



Kagawa's Draft Essay "On World Peace," Tokushima Mainichi, 1906

period brings adolescents, male and female, into devout commitment to causes.”⁵⁹ About a year later, the seventeen-year-old Kagawa took his cause to a broad reading public, contributing a serialized essay entitled “On World Peace” to the local edition of the Mainichi newspaper. This thoughtful essay reflects the influence of Christian socialism and especially Tolstoy’s humanist writings on nonresistance, which were also deeply influential for Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Next he introduces his developing interest in religious philosophy after reading Francis Patton’s *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* with Meyers. In this regard, he also mentions Robert Flint’s *Theism* and the religious books of Takahashi Gorō, a Japanese Christian well known for his work on the translation of the Bible. He says he was helped to understand Patton’s book by reading a pamphlet by De Forest called “World Christianity.” Able to freely borrow books from Meyers’s library, he reports copying Henry Drummond’s treatise on the supremacy of love, *The Greatest Thing in the World*, word-by-word into his notebook.⁶⁰ Next he says he completely lost track of time reading Anesaki Masaharu’s⁶¹ translation of von Hartmann’s philosophy of religion. In thinking about this list, we should note that it was not so much Christian theology, *per se*, but a theistic philosophy of religion that arrested the young Kagawa’s attention even before he left for Meiji Gakuin. In passing, he also mentions that Mori

59. Loder, *Logic of the Spirit*, 214.

60. Kagawa, “Leaving My Village,” 103.

61. Anesaki was professor at Tokyo Imperial University and is considered the father of religious studies in Japan.

Ōgai's Japanese translation of Goethe's *Faust* awakened in him a sense of excitement about physical love.

Having lost the financial support of his uncle because of his decision to seek Christian ordination, Meyers made a commitment to send Kagawa 11 yen each month, enabling him to enroll at Meiji Gakuin, a private school founded by Presbyterian and Reformed missionaries in Tokyo.⁶² There he applied himself to his studies and, it seems even more vigorously, to his extracurricular reading. He comments that he found most of the first-year classes too easy, so he enrolled in higher-level English lectures, taught by the missionaries, on astronomy, economics, and Western history. He wrote his exams in English. He credits his ability to function at a high level in English to the time he had spent with Meyers in Tokushima in individual tutorials. According to Meyers, August Karl Reischauer,⁶³ professor at Meiji Gakuin, called Kagawa "the most brilliant student he had ever taught."⁶⁴

Amazed by the holdings of the Meiji Gakuin Library, he reports that he devoured multi-volume reference works in the philosophy of religion and the history of philosophy. He then turns the spotlight on a certain thinker, who was to become a decisive influence on his subsequent views:

Two books that especially influenced me were the English translation of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* and Dr. Bowne's *Metaphysics: A Study in First Principles*. While I sensed that Hegel's philosophy was too optimistic, I came to clearly understand why after reading Schopenhauer. The personalist religious philosophy of Bowne was a gift of the Meiji Gakuin Library for which I gave thanks. I think it is because I encountered this good book at a young age that I have not wavered in my own pursuit of a personalist philosophy of religion from the time I read Bowne's religious philosophy as a seventeen year-old up to the present.⁶⁵

In chapter 2, we will show how the so-called "Boston Personalism" of Borden Parker Bowne opened to Kagawa a "middle way" between philosophical idealism and materialism that resonated with his own instincts.

Also, having identified with the writings of Abe Isoo and Kinoshita

62. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 104.

63. The Reischauers were Presbyterian missionaries and parents of Edwin O. Reischauer, the renowned Harvard University Japanologist and Ambassador to Japan from 1961 to 1966.

64. Speer, "Biographical Sketch," 3.

65. Kagawa, "Leaving My Village," 105.

Naoe, Kagawa says he often attended lectures at Tokyo's Kanda Church given by Kinoshita and other Japanese Christian socialists. This ideological association with the pacifist socialists got him into more trouble during his first year at Meiji Gakuin. He recalls:

After defeating Russia in Meiji 38 (1905), Japanese citizens were completely intoxicated. But as a believer in Tolstoy's pacifism and Christian socialism, I delivered an anti-war speech during a discussion at Meiji Gakuin. I was taken out behind the library, and after being verbally abused by several students, one of the fourth-year students who lived in the dormitory struck me. Because of this, my dormitory life at Meiji Gakuin was very sad.⁶⁶

Sounding a more positive note, Kagawa reports on hearing William Jennings Bryan speak on peace at the Kanda YMCA in Tokyo and also being moved by the speeches of the Salvation Army's General William Booth. In the Spring of 1906, while acting as student chair of the YMCA, Kagawa was asked to interpret the speeches of a certain Dr. Friis from Sweden, as well as an unnamed YMCA representative from India.

Dr. Meyers had been called to teach at the recently opened Kōbe Theological School, and on the advice of his mentor, Kagawa left Meiji Gakuin and its magnificent library in March 1907, and after a brief trip back to Tokushima to accompany Meyers on an evangelistic mission in the Yoshino River Basin, where this story began, Kagawa eventually set off with Meyers to enroll at the more conservative Presbyterian school in Kōbe.

Here we need to mention a pivotal event that Kagawa omits from "Leaving My Village," perhaps because this piece was written for a general rather than a specifically Christian audience. After the evangelistic tour with Meyers and before enrolling at the Kōbe Theological School in the fall semester, Kagawa spent some time working in Toyohashi, a small city near Nagoya. There he met Rev. Nagao Ken, a pastor who lived an exemplary life of love, poverty, and service. Kagawa was deeply impressed by the simple witness of Nagao and his family, and seems to have fallen in love with his eldest daughter.⁶⁷ Presumably during a post-war trip to the United States, Kagawa recounts the dramatic experience that occurred in

66. *Ibid.*, 105.

67. Mutō, *A Biography of Kagawa*, 73. Mutō reference from Bickle, *The New Jerusalem*, 49.

the summer of 1907.⁶⁸ He had been preaching daily on the streets and was on the verge of collapse. He begins:

On the fortieth day, at about nine o'clock in the evening, it began to rain while I was still preaching. For a week my voice had been getting weaker and weaker, and when the rain began falling my body was swaying to and fro. At one time I had difficulty in getting my breath. I began to feel horribly cold, but I determined, whatever happened, to finish my sermon. "In conclusion," I cried, "I tell you God is love, and I will affirm God's love till I fall. Where there is love, God and life reveal themselves."⁶⁹

He somehow made it home, but after his fever spiked at 104 degrees, the doctor told him he was unlikely to recover from this severe attack of chronic tuberculosis, which had been first diagnosed when he was thirteen years old. His condition worsened, and fearing the end was near, the doctor suggested he call his friends. Kagawa recalls the scene.

The sun was setting in the west. I could see its reflection on my pillow. For four hours I prayed, waiting for my last breath. Then there came a peculiar, mysterious experience—an ecstatic consciousness of God; a feeling that God was inside me and all around me. I felt a great ecstasy and joy. I coughed up a cupful of clotted blood. I could breathe again. The fever was reduced. I forgot to die. The doctor came back at nine-thirty. He was disappointed. He had written a certificate for my cremation and feared the people would call him a quack.⁷⁰

We return to this experience in chapter 4 in our exploration of the mystical dimension of Kagawa's "scientific mysticism."

A SUCCESSION OF ILLNESSES AND THE NOVEL

To return to "Leaving My Village," the final section is entitled "Recuperating from Pulmonary Tuberculosis." Here we find a personal tribute to Dr. Meyers and a retelling of events leading up to the publication of his best-selling novel, *Before the Dawn*. The sixty-six-year-old Kagawa reminisces about his relationship with Meyers in the most intimate terms.

68. We should note that this account comes forty years after the event, thus it had the benefit of the kind of rescripting often applied to long-term memories, and perhaps traumatic ones most especially.

69. Bradshaw, *Unconquerable Kagawa*, 82–83.

70. *Ibid.*, 83.