



# **In Defense of Justice: Joseph Kurihara and the Japanese American Struggle for Equality (The Asian American Experience)**

*Eileen H. Tamura*

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As a leading dissident in the World War II concentration camps for Japanese Americans, the controversial figure Joseph Yoshisuke Kurihara stands out as an icon of Japanese American resistance. In this astute biography, Kurihara's life provides a window into the history of Japanese Americans during the first half of the twentieth century. Born in Hawai'i to Japanese parents who immigrated to work on the sugar plantations, Kurihara was transformed by the forced removal and incarceration of ethnic Japanese during World War II. As an inmate at Manzanar in California, Kurihara became one of the leaders of a dissident group within the camp and was implicated in the Manzanar incident, a serious civil disturbance that erupted on December 6, 1942. In 1945, after three years and seven months of incarceration, he renounced his U.S. citizenship and boarded a ship for Japan, never to return to the United States. Shedding light on the turmoil within the camps as well as the sensitive and formerly unspoken issue of citizenship renunciation among Japanese Americans, *In Defense of Justice* explores one man's struggles with the complexities of loyalty and resistance.

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