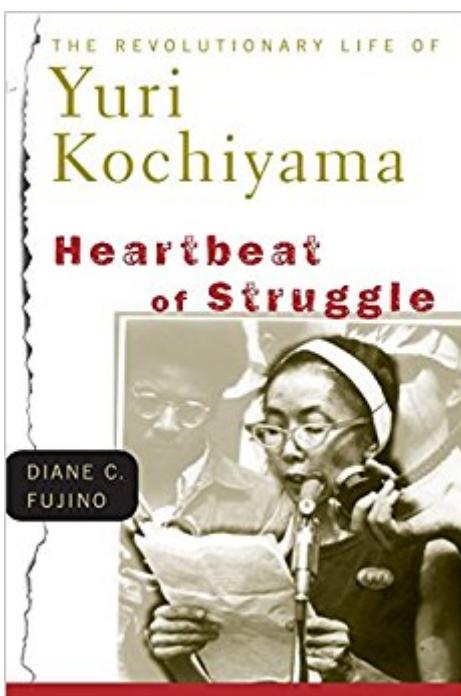


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# Heartbeat Of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life Of Yuri Kochiyama (Critical American Studies)



## Synopsis

On February 12, 1965, in the Audubon Ballroom, Yuri Kochiyama cradled Malcolm X in her arms as he died, but her role as a public servant and activist began much earlier than this pivotal public moment. *Heartbeat of Struggle* is the first biography of this courageous woman, the most prominent Asian American activist to emerge during the 1960s. Based on extensive archival research and interviews with Kochiyama's family, friends, and the subject herself, Diane C. Fujino traces Kochiyama's life from an "all-American" childhood to her achievements as a tireless defender of - and fighter for - human rights. Raised by a Japanese immigrant family in California during the 1920s and 1930s, Kochiyama was active in sports, school, and church. She was both unquestioningly patriotic and largely unconscious of race and racism in the United States. After Pearl Harbor, however, Kochiyama's family was among the thousands of Japanese Americans forcibly removed to internment camps for the duration of the war, a traumatic experience that opened her eyes to the existence of social injustice. After the war, Kochiyama moved to New York. It was in the context of the vibrant Black movement in Harlem in the 1960s that she began her activist career. There, she met Malcolm X, who inspired her radical political development and the ensuing four decades of incessant work for Black liberation, Asian American equality, Puerto Rican independence, and political prisoner defense. Kochiyama is widely respected for her work in forging unity among diverse communities, especially between Asian and African Americans. Fujino, a scholar and activist, offers an in-depth examination of Kochiyama's political awakening, rich life, and impressive achievements with particular attention to how her public role so often defied gender, racial, and cultural norms. *Heartbeat of Struggle* is a source of inspiration and guidance for anyone committed to social change.

## Book Information

Series: Critical American Studies

Paperback: 432 pages

Publisher: Univ Of Minnesota Press; 1 edition (April 24, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0816645930

ISBN-13: 978-0816645930

Product Dimensions: 5.9 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #598,412 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #164 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Japanese #315 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Asian American Studies #334 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Regional U.S. > Mid Atlantic

## Customer Reviews

Diane Fujino accurately captures the strife of social injustices perpetrated by a nation that was and is still very much controlled by those who harbor deep rooted, yet carefully concealed, racist values. This is a fascinating read that follows the life of Yuri Kochiyama who was changed from an American with unquestioning loyalty to her country, into a TRUE American who stands up for the those persecuted in this nation for nothing more than belonging to a non-white race. Yuri was driven to question authority and speak out against the social injustices that had been all around her yet unnoticed until the bombing of Pearl Harbor highlighted the government sanctioned racism and unjustified persecution of her family and friends of Asian descent. This book applies every bit today as it did then. A great read!

I really enjoyed this book. It has always been amazing to me to watch the transition of people who are naive about their actual condition in society. On comparing this book to "Looking like the Enemy" by Mary Matsuda Gruenwald, who was also incarcerated in the United States during WWII because she was Japanese, I found the two personalities and understandings so diverse in perspective, that I wondered if the two people were living on the same planet. Both women were basically of the same class, but one[Yuri] actually believed the existence she was living was 'real' for all of her people. The book allows the reader to slowly transition with Yuri to a state of reality, which Mary Matsuda was aware of from the outstart. I had promised myself that I would cover the incarceration of the American Japanese during WWII in my global studies course. As it turned out Mary's book fulfilled every need I had to enlighten the students, many of whom never knew that this incarceration had occurred. I wrote to Mary Matsuda and she kindly sent me an autographed copy. I in return put the book on my class list. Amazingly, students from other history classes stood in the halls so they could hear me speak on the subject. If I were still teaching in New Jersey, I would list both books for my course so that the students could learn how the two experiences affected the writers' opinions about their conditions during this very significant period in American history. Bonita Evans, Ph.D.

This book is about a woman whose life was completely changed by the fact that she was an American of Japanese ancestry. Her family (as well as all people of Japanese ancestry) were put into concentration camps by the U.S. government even if they were born in the U.S. She became involved with groups that were fighting for their rights as Americans. The book gave me insights on how people of color have to struggle to gain equality in this country.

As the Washington Free Beacon notes, a sympathetic biography of Kochiyama, Heartbeat of Struggle by Diane Carol Fujino, reveals that she didn't so much sympathize with American Muslims as support the 9/11 attackers. While all decent people should sympathize with her experience during World War Two, it turned her against this country in a way that caused her to embrace radical Marxism and to support anyone who attacked America, including bin Laden. She came to believe that the main terrorist and the main enemy of the world's people is the U.S. government. She also said, "I consider Osama bin Laden as one of the people that I admire. To me, he is in the category of Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, Fidel Castro, all leaders that I admire."

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