

# Brazil-Maru



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From Japanese-American writer Yamashita: a story of Japanese emigration set, like her first novel ("Through the Arc of the Rain Forest," 1990), in Brazil. A range of characters, male and female, tell about a particular group of Japanese who emigrated to Brazil in the first decades of this century. Christian, well-educated, and reasonably affluent, they sought to establish communities where Christian and Japanese values could flourish. The group prospered, though not without cost, and it is this cost that's a major theme here. A secondary theme, suggested by the quotes from the philosopher Rousseau that precede each section, is the nature of education in a new world where emigrants' children often have only 'natural and purely physical knowledge.' Young Emile begins with his recollections of his 1925 arrival in Brazil as a small child; the uncomfortable journey to the settlement where families already there helped them clear land; and the hard work required to become self-sufficient. But even the most idealistic communities have problems, and, successively, Emile, Haru, Kantaro, and Genji, over the years, record the events and personalities that threatened the group: Kantaro, the visionary and dilettante, whose enterprises from baseball to chicken-farming had unforeseen consequences; the bitter divisions caused by WW I that led to the murder of an original founder; the effects of the enduring passion of Yergo for Haru; and the increased assimilation with neighboring Brazilians. Paradoxically, assimilated Guillerme notes in

an epilogue that thousands of unemployed Japanese-Brazilians are currently working in Japan as menial labor. Though often seeming more a work of reportage than a novel, Yamashita's characters are vital, full-bodied creations offering sufficient balance, as well as answers to the questions raised. Informative and timely.-"Kirkus"

作者介绍:

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