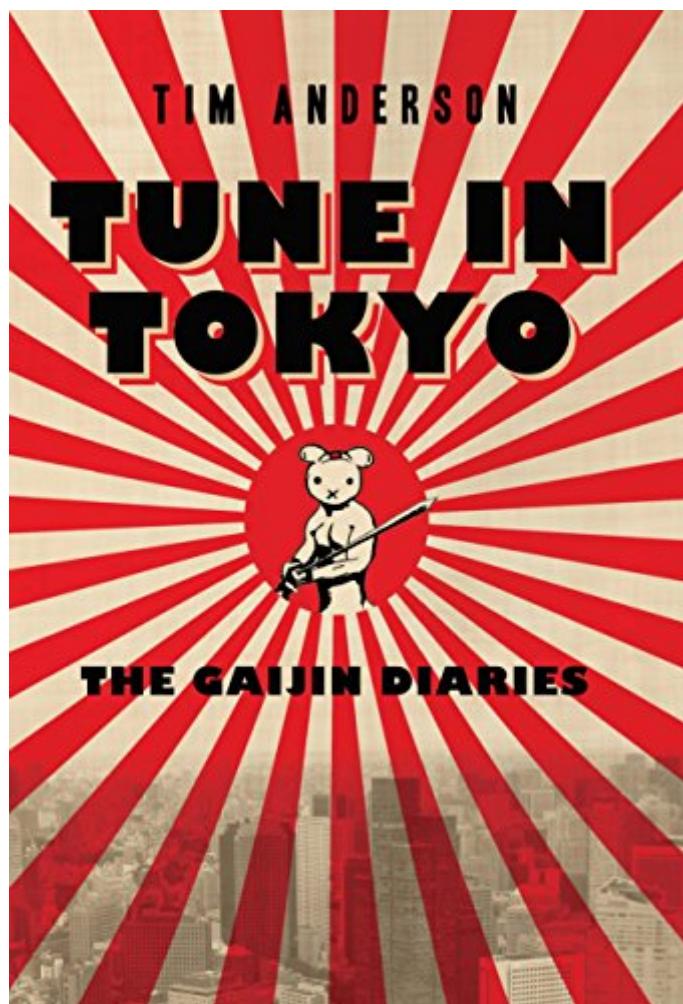


The book was found

Tune In Tokyo: The Gaijin Diaries



Synopsis

Everyone wants to escape their boring, stagnant lives full of inertia and regret. But so few people actually have the bravery to run “ run away from everything and selflessly seek out personal fulfillment on the other side of the world where they don’t understand anything and won’t be expected to. The world is full of cowards. Tim Anderson was pushing thirty and working a string of dead-end jobs when he made the spontaneous decision to pack his bags and move to Japan. It was a gutsy move, especially for a tall, white, gay Southerner who didn’t speak a lick of Japanese. But his life desperately needed a shot of adrenaline, and what better way to get one than to leave behind his boyfriend, his cat, and his Siouxsie and the Banshees box set to move to a tiny, overcrowded island heaving with clever, sensibly proportioned people who make him look fat? In Tokyo, Tim became a gaijin, an outsider whose stumbling progression through Japanese culture is minutely chronicled in these sixteen hilarious stories. Despite the steep learning curve and the seemingly constant humiliation, the gaijin from North Carolina gradually begins to find his way. Whether playing drums on the fly in an otherwise all-Japanese noise band or attempting to keep his English classroom clean when it’s invaded by an older female student with a dirty mind, Tim comes to realize that living a meaningful life is about expecting the unexpected...right when he least expects it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The pleasure any reader will have in any travelogue depends on the personality of the author. Does he or she make a good travel companion? Tim Anderson is snarkily funny and doesn't complain. He plunges into the life of an English teacher in Tokyo with brio. Tokyo is one of my favorite cities and Anderson's narrative is often amusing. I'm not sorry I "visited" Tokyo again and glimpsed it again through his eyes. Tokyo is a fascinating city and Tim gives us all the surface glitz. Don't expect great insights or to learn anything new about Japan. I didn't mind that Tim was self-absorbed, ignorant and clueless at the beginning of the book. One travels to discover and learn. Or some of us do. But the typical chapter in this book will have Tim observing some typically Tokyo scene and then go off into some kind of fantasy riff as if the stuff happening in Tim's head was more real than what he was seeing. Worse, the fantasy seemed to shut off his natural curiosity about what he saw so he remained ignorant and was never driven to find out why. At only one point did he come close to grasping an essential difference between Japan and America and that was in the chapter on karaoke. He notes that Americans hog the microphone playing the big star that they see in their heads. Then he talks about going out drunk with a group of Japanese who when one person sang would act like the back up singers/musical group. And he got into it--he liked being part of the group with everybody participating...but it didn't lead him to a better understanding of the importance of the group to the Japanese persona. At the end of the chapter he declares his intention of continuing to hog the microphone in the American Way.

I bought this book because it sounded like I had a lot in common with the author. I too, teach English in Japan (although not Tokyo) and I was excited to read a book detailing the adventures of another young gay guy in Japan. Unfortunately, it kind of let me down. The writing, for me, was hard to follow. There were times when Mr. Anderson would launch into detailed fantasies mid-story. A lot of the times, it was hard to distinguish what he was actually seeing and doing and what he was just fantasizing about. Another thing that made the book hard to read was the use of really really long, detailed sentences that used several examples and descriptions and references all crammed into an incredibly long run-on-esque sentence that when I was in junior high and high school my teachers would always berate me about and threaten me with certain death unless I beat it into my poor hormonal, adolescent brain that it was wrong and I avoided them at all costs.

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