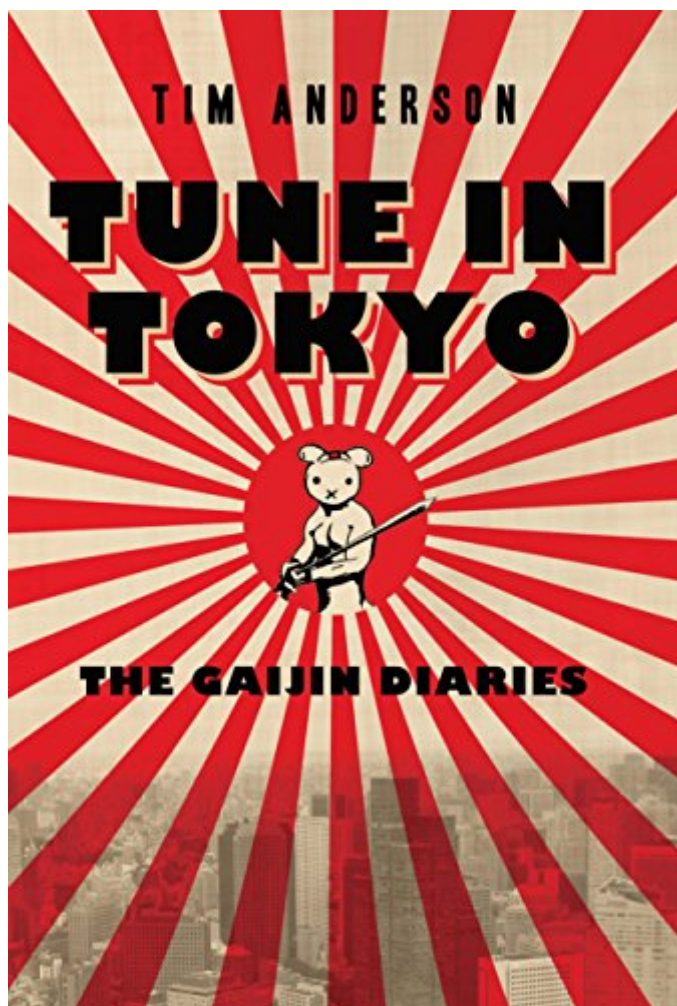


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# Tune In Tokyo: The Gaijin Diaries



## Synopsis

Everyone wants to escape their boring, stagnant lives full of inertia and regret. But so few people actually have the bravery to run 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

If your tastes run to sophomoric, disjointed romps through Japan, this is your book and it's five stars. Alas, I am a bit of an old fart with a more senior serene view and I give it 3 stars. I word my review like that because I believe that tastes in literature can be very subjective. And so I mean my opening sentences. What? You couldn't enjoy it just because I didn't? I was enjoying learning about Japan but I got lost in a young persons world that left me every bit as disoriented as our author and his friends sometimes found themselves. I gave up early in the book. Maybe I shouldn't have?

I loved this book. I love that it was not about sexual conquests or about judging those he taught. He presents life abroad with a love and honey moon feeling that makes you want to be there seeing and experiencing it with him. He pulls you in with his over the top fantasies and has made me laugh out loud with the sometimes lack luster reality. Sure I would like to have read more about some things, for him to delve deeper. But this was perfect as is in my opinion. He comes out of his shell, pushes his own boundaries, and falls in love with a city. And makes me not only want to do that too, but feel like it is indeed possible.

I don't usually give 5 stars to "light reading", but I found "Tune in Tokyo" to be well-written, original, funny and interesting, and a more effective portrait of Japan's endearing idiosyncrasies than other books focused on it. It also brought me to consider the value of just taking a leap of faith, of doing something completely new and perhaps uncomfortable, of rebooting your life by uprooting yourself from daily existence as you know it; and it was more successful at it than the many self-improvement books I've read, despite its low-key, unassuming and colloquial writing. Made me want to run and get a job as an English teacher in Japan. Ah, if only I were a native speaker of it! ;)

By the time I was 1/3 of the way through this book I ordered two printed copies to give to people I know who have spent time working in Japan (but only for a month or less at a time). Tim Anderson seamlessly segues from actual events to imagined events and back. Many of us try to imagine what is going to happen in new situations that are coming up in our lives. Tim includes this in his storytelling comparing what he imagined it would be like with how events actually did unfold. Many

of the fads in Japan are mysterious and crazy to people in the states. (And probably vice-versa.) I was intrigued to see a review of this book written by a US citizen working in Japan, stating that it was not possible to separate Tim's fantasies from his descriptions of actual events. This suggests to me that people from the US really do find Japanese popular culture to be mind-boggling. I didn't have any problems along these lines, but I read it safely in my own family room. I admire Tim's sense of adventure and his willingness to get out there and experience another culture. I really enjoyed his book, and so did the two people I shared it with.

This book is hysterical. I couldn't put it down...the writing is fresh, witty and so so funny....plus it really gives you a clear picture of the difference in the Japanese and Western cultures, especially when it came to him trying to teach English...an absolute must read...you won't stop laughing out loud...just don't read it on the bus or train...people will think you are mad.....

This book is a lot of fun in parts, but there are portions that for me were just plain tedious. Sometimes I laughed out loud and I smiled many times. The rest of the time I was yawning and wanting the book to end. I'm a person who's more interested in people than in the cultural backdrop of a city. So don't tell me about all the useless articles for sale in the shops or at least not in such excruciating detail. I enjoyed reading about his students, both the adults and the children, his fellow teachers, and other people he met during his stay in Tokyo. Anderson is very humorous, and the people he encountered were funny enough to be featured in a sitcom. It was interesting to see how Anderson's ego took a backseat sometimes to the group--how he learned to enjoy camaraderie in Tokyo. It was particularly amusing to note the ironies and difficulties of Anderson's life in Toyko as a gay man who sometimes had to fake it when he was asked about his taste in women. I enjoyed reading about the visit from his American boyfriend. He doesn't leave sex out, but there is nothing offensive here--nothing explicit. I was okay with the language. Vulgar words when they're not purely gratuitous don't offend me much, and I don't recall any profanity for which I was happy. If a book can make me laugh or smile, it's not a waste; it's just that there was material that I considered a bit superfluous and frankly boring. But there are some who might be bored by the parts that amused me and vice versa.

This is a lighthearted, funny book deliberately written from the "naive observer" point of view, almost in *Walter Mitty* fashion. Mr. Anderson has the experiences, and leaves his readers to draw their own conclusions. Where is it written that all tales of intercultural jaunts need to be executed with high

seriousness and pedantry? This book is not! Read it, and have a fun time in Japan, with an English teacher that claims to have no clue. It is laugh out loud funny, and you will learn more than you first think. I found myself wondering, if Tim Anderson were not gay, how this story might have ended, or even transpired. He was able to establish a close friendship with a young Japanese female--I wondered if he would have been able to do this if not gay. I also wondered to what extent his female friend wished he were not gay, after all? This is a wonderfully entertaining book, with kaleidoscopic takes on various portions of Tokyo as well as some other locales in Japan. The descriptions are all there, as tangible as the soil we walk on, but the interpretations are left to you.

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