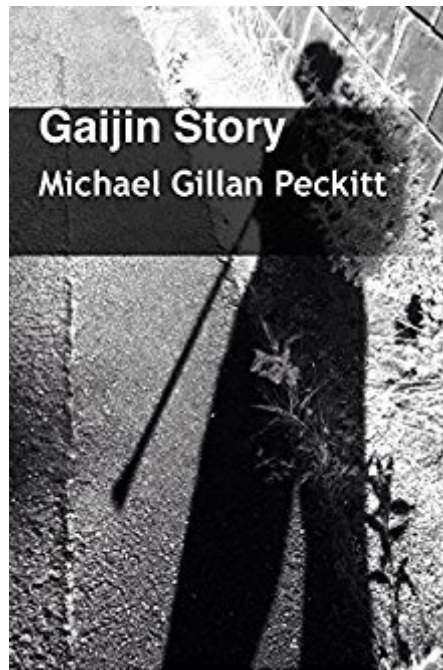




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Gaijin Story: Tales Of A British Disabled Man In Japan



Synopsis

"When I arrived in Tokyo on 26th August 2012 at around 6am, unwashed and in the midsummer Japan sun, I hugged my wife hello â “ my wife has a very embracing hug, the kind at the end of which you feel deprived of oxygen. Iâ™ve always enjoyed them. I was driven away from Haneda through Tokyo all the way through Shinjuku, with one overriding thought on my mind â “ I was safe." "Gaijin Story: Tales of a British Disabled Man in Japan" is a short collection of essays and articles detailing the experiences of British man and his first two years of living in Japan.

Book Information

File Size: 366 KB

Print Length: 55 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Limping Philosopher Publications; 1 edition (July 22, 2014)

Publication Date: July 22, 2014

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00M1J2I5I

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #1,963,161 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #83

inÂ Books > Travel > Specialty Travel > Special Needs #296 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks >

Nonfiction > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Special Groups > Disabled #650

inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Travel > Asia > Japan

Customer Reviews

Like another reviewer here, I'm quite familiar with the always-increasing stack of "foreigner does Japan" books. They've been popular (or, if not popular, seem to be compulsively written by such foreigners) since Lafcadio Hearn first traveled from New Orleans to Japan to teach middle school English in 1890. And like that other reviewer, and Hearn, I, too, have added to that stack. Included in that pile of books are some compelling and worth while reads (from Hearn's 19th century diaries,

to two compilations of Robert Collins -- aka "Max Danger" -- Japan Times first person columns in the late 1980s), and others are just inartfully written, superficial accounts of this or that "wacky thing that happened" during the writer's one- or two-year stay in Japan. "Gaijin Story" falls into the former, worth while, and dare I say *important* category. Mr. Peckitt includes both light touches and heavy poundings in "Gaijin Story" the likes of which reveal not just his experience, but Japan's experiencing *him*. There's no megalomania here, though. Heartfelt observations and wry incredulity carry most of the narrative, a narrative written by a man who wants to embrace Japan, even when Japan's cultural foibles, dare I say its disabilities, make loving it a challenge. "Gaijin Story" provides a important snapshot of a foreigner's life and living in Japan in the second decade of the 21st century. If it doesn't find its way into various classrooms -- cross-cultural communications, Japan studies, disabilities advocacy, and the like -- the loss will be to those who failed to read it and benefit by its insights.

There's a thriving cottage industry in foreigners-do-Japan books (yours truly may have added a few straws to the thatched roof too, ahem) but I can't think of any that are told by a disabled man. Although, to Peckitt's credit, he doesn't actually talk that much about "being disabled" in Japan, so much as just "being" in Japan. These are his observations after living in Japan for two years, so shouldn't be read as definitive on the gaijin experience or Japan. Instead, think of this as a first shot at the target. So we get observations about adjusting to life far from the discomforts of home and the first blossoms of appreciation of living in a foreign land as interesting as Japan. His observations strike me as sound, although I wonder if he will find Japan as endlessly fascinating and other-worldly after living here a few more years. But as his views mature, I'm confident there will be much more worthwhile reading to come. Michael Gillan Peckett's is the right man in the right place to tell a fascinating story.

Sad. Really sad, and useless.

Michael gives a great description of living in Japan as a foreigner. Tales from daily life, adjusting to new things, and feeling like an outsider in his own country during a return visit. These are all things that I have dealt with and connected with in the book. The title is a bit misleading so don't expect to hear him tell too many stories about dealing with disabilities in Japan...but you should expect to true to life retelling of the foreign experience in Japan. It's a quick read but I enjoyed it and look forward to reading more about his experiences.

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