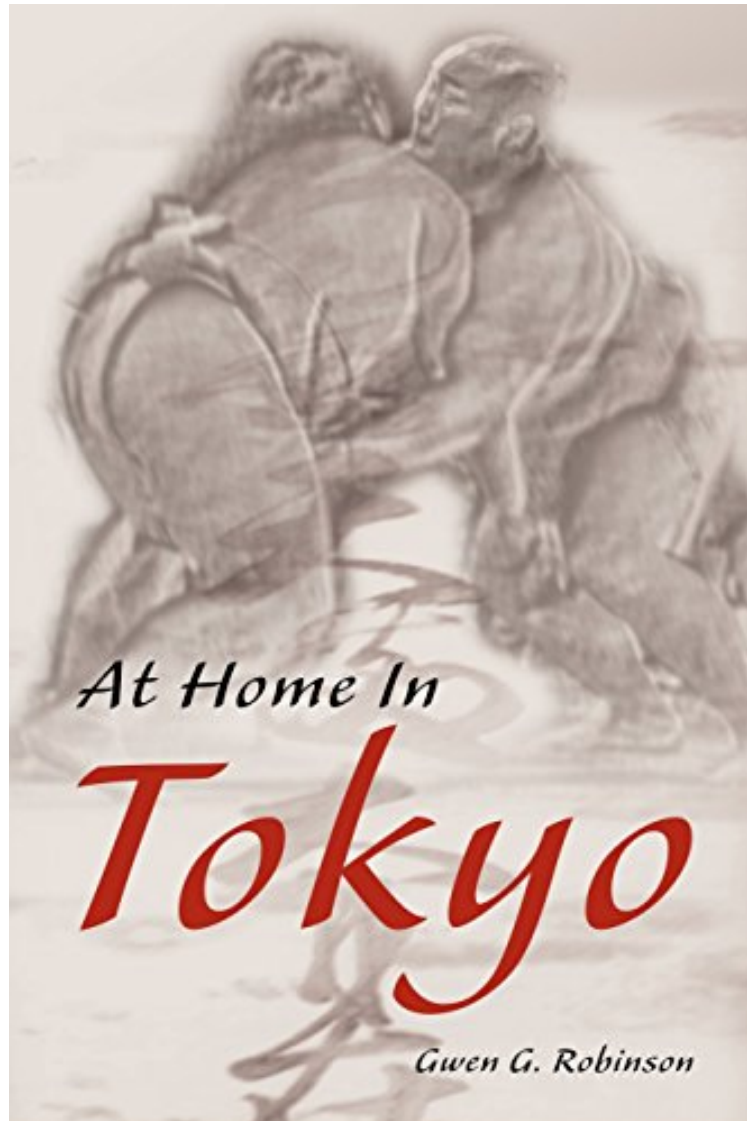


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At Home in Tokyo

Gwen G Robinson

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Gwen G Robinson : At Home in Tokyo before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At Home in Tokyo:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant firsthand account of life in TokyoBy Aaron S. BermanAs a great lover of Japan, and Tokyo especially, I'm always looking for a book that goes beyond the usual touristy prose to describe what it's like to actually live there. In my experience these are pretty hard to come by once you venture beyond Donald Richie's contributions. However, this book really gives you a detailed look and feel for what it's like to be plopped down in Tokyo, all from a gaijin's perspective. I can't recommend this book highly enough.1 of 1 people

found the following review helpful. At Home in Tokyo By M. E. Hinton In the early 1990s Gwen G. Robinson spent a year in Tokyo with her husband, who was a visiting professor/consultant there. She could not speak Japanese. Many people, when thrust into an utterly unfamiliar environment, would withdraw. Instead, the author closely observed and described her surroundings and her own reactions to them. She writes about her bewilderingly high-tech house, shopping for unidentifiable food, venturing forth via public transportation, getting to know her husband's interesting colleagues, visiting other parts of Japan (and, briefly, Australia), entertaining also-bewildered family members, and living an "ordinary" life. However, Robinson is obviously no ordinary woman, and her writing reflects a deep knowledge of world cultures and a scholar's tendency to analyze her surroundings in that context. The often-funny and engaging narrative is interspersed with historical and linguistic bits of information. Her account of tutoring three Japanese women in English is particularly revealing of cultural differences. I highly recommend this book--it is like visiting Japan without actually going there.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. At Home in Tokyo By do NOT display my name. You do NOT have my permission to do so. Gwen Robinson charmingly tells of her year in Japan where her husband an academic appointment in Tokyo. So clear and colorful is Gwen in her telling that this reader almost feels that it is herself who is struggling with an unknown language, grocery shopping, meeting new people, discovering small intimate neighborhoods within the big city, and, finally, making friends and being a part of things. One only hopes that one would have the author's intelligence, empathy, good humor, and ability to laugh at herself. There is considerable information here on modern Japan--the position of women, theater, education, the beauties of the countryside. In the company of Gwen and her family, we are with worldly people and can feel grateful to have their take on things. This book has made me feel very ready to visit Japan myself.

Previous sojourns in Tokyo's luxury hotels had given the Robinsons no inkling of the trials ahead when they arrived there to stay and work for a whole year. The Japanese government had kindly provided a never-before-lived-in, bewilderingly high-tech house, which Gwen set out to make a home. She knew no Japanese; her neighbors knew no English. The house was an automated puzzle. Its domestic machines were activated by inscrutable kanji-labeled controls, whose mastery involved risky experiment. The surrounding neighborhood was a densely packed maze of unmarked paths and alleyways. Once the garden gate had clanged behind her, it was no sure bet Gwen would find her way home again. Purchasing food was like solving a mystery, for the exuberant market displays of exotica demanded fierce intellectual contemplation, as well as rummaging squeezes and prods. Selection seemed always a high-stake gamble, for amongst the possible delights lurked shock and even possible danger. Nevertheless, Gwen can to terms with the difficulties, and before the year was over had delved deeply into the fabric of the social and cultural life of Japan. The rich personalities and charming eccentricities of her dramatis personae provide colorful and informative reading. She tells it all in this warm affectionate and often hilarious story. This is a true account of coming to feel At Home in Tokyo.