

CUL286 FLPA Tokyo: Live Location

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We leave from the hotel lobby at 9 am sharp. And unlike in the battlefield in war, we will leave you behind if you are a casualty (i.e., late).

This was essentially the message that GG sent to our WhatsApp FLPA group chat last night. It is extremely insulting to be tardy in Japanese culture. And today we have a 10 am appointment for a group tour at the Imperial Palace, the symbol of all that is proper and virtuous about Japan.

Muhammad and I decide to eat breakfast at Sunali, a local Bengali bistro run by a Bangladeshi immigrant to Japan, on the morning of our trip. As I sink my teeth into a chunk of warm spicy chickpea curry haphazardly wrapped in a piece of toasted butter naan, I cannot believe I am eating some of the best chana masala I have ever tasted in a place that is ... not only off the beaten track within this neighbourhood ... but this neighbourhood is, itself, off the beaten track in Tokyo ... which, lest you forget, is the epicenter of sushi.

I double-tap my cellphone with my pinky finger. Yikes – it is 8:37 am. I am supposed to meet Rachel, one of my students, in the hotel lobby at 8:45. We need to get to the subway station before GG and the rest of the class to top up Rachel's Suica card (metro pass). That way there is no holdup when it comes time to entering the station all together.

I look down at my half-eaten plate. The hotel is an 8-minute walk away. I am not going to make it at this rate. I call Rachel on WhatsApp and ask her to meet me at the bistro, which is (sort of) on the way to the station.

"I'll text you the address once we get off the phone," I said.

"Okay, sure," she said.

I get a text back a few minutes later.

Can u send the live location? I'm having trouble finding that area

The *what* location? My gut tells me I am an old and outdated model of a human being. The image of the T-800 Terminator pops into my head.

I show the text to Muhammad. He leans over, taps the "+" sign, then "Location," then "Share Live Location" and voila, Rachel knows our real-time movements for the next 15 minutes.

I look up at Muhammad with mouth agape. He smiles like it's nothing.

We arrive just outside of Shin Otsuka station at 8:58 am. There is no sign of the rest of our group.

I text GG. She replies within seconds.

We are at entrance 1

I look up at the number of the station structure at which we are standing. It says "1."

So are we

GG says she'll send her live location. *There's that word again.* I discover they are across the street, at one of the other station entrances.

Ping. I get another text from GG.

Let's just meet on platform 1

Ok

Muhammad and I tap our Suica cards, enter the subway platform and walk to the other end. As soon we see the rest of our group, the train arrives as if on cue.

Technology!

By Glen Choi

Featured Image by Ashton Davis

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