

CUL286 FLPA Tokyo: WELCOME TO JAPAN (Part 1)

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Sunday, February 25

The rain is drizzling and the wind biting when I step outside.

Ahh... Thank you, Tokyo. You are beautiful just the same. For I am thankful to breath in fresh air for the first time in fourteen hours. This was how much time more than two hundred of us spent together in essentially a flying box (a.k.a Boeing 777).

As our chartered bus glides its way to our hotel, I turn around in my seat at the front. Some of my students have their eyes closed. Some half-closed. And some wide open. I sit back down and realize something. I need to vomit. Vomit words, that is.

We finally made it, I say to Maxine. Tokyo reminds me of Seoul, I say to Maxine. But a quieter and less-honking version, I say to Maxine. Can you imagine 14 million people in one prefecture, I say to Maxine. And can you believe I was able to talk to my mother over the phone while we were somewhere over the Pacific Ocean, I say to Maxine.

A little later, Maxine gets up to move to the back of the bus (to catch up on some sleep, so I am told!). I turn the other way to face Carolyn and Giovanna from Absolute Internship, our host institution for this trip.

The scavenger hunt in downtown Tokyo should be a great icebreaker!

Love our schedule – we visit local companies AND cultural sites!

We get to eat at your favourite izakaya tonight, Giovanna?!

Why am I so chatty, I think to myself when I have a moment of alone time. Maybe I feel the need to make up for the day and a half we lost in the air. I double-tap my cellphone to confirm. Yep. Local time: 6:43 pm. Date: Sunday, February 25. This is grim news. I take out my crinkled Air Canada boarding pass from my bag. Departure time: 12:55 pm. Date: Saturday, February 24. I feel like someone who has been robbed of something near and dear to them.

By Glen Choi