

## Cross-Country Rev. Moon is Innocent Peace Walk: Final Stretch

Matsuo Machida  
September 11, 2015



On Monday, August 31, Matsuo Machida received continued kindness from strangers, including Cynthia, the woman who had given Machida \$4 the day before for a drink. She saw him walking 30 miles east of where she encountered him previously, stopped her car and walked toward him to greet him, wish him well and say that her husband had just given her four Walmart gift cards that someone had paid him with. She told Machida that four cards was too many for her, and she wanted to share two of them with him. They were worth \$10 each.

Mr. Machida expressed his deep gratitude to Cynthia and thanked her for stopping again. He reflected on the \$20 amount in all, because earlier that morning he had to blow his nose. He bent down and was just about to blow his nose toward the ground, when he saw a \$20 dollar bill in the dewy grass. He felt heaven with him throughout the day, thinking, had he not had to blow his nose, he'd never have found the money.

He made it in the early night to Danville on the outskirts of Indianapolis. He adjusted to the humidity a little better, accomplishing 35 miles that day.

The next day opened a new month—the month Mr. Machida would finally arrive to the East Coast. He had a lot in store for him that day. Once again, he had a media meeting, this time in Indianapolis. Mr. Machida's heart was lifted that he could share his

message – the one he walks for. His interview was played on the prime time news at 7pm. Mr. Machida was only able to make 27 miles progress but determined that on Wednesday he'd walk a lot more miles than normal.

On September 2, Mr. Machida pushed himself very hard to compensate for the miles lost. True to his word, he progressed along historic US Highway 40 and walked until almost 9:30 pm, which is about an hour and a half longer than he usually walks.

The next day was a planned day of rest, both to mark the solar calendar day of Rev. Moon's passing, and to celebrate the accomplishment of 70 days on the road.

Friday, September 4, was another day of extremes—this time in temperature rather than miles. The early morning was quite mild, perhaps 69 or 70 degrees, but the afternoon was hot and humid, reaching 91 and with a humidity in the 90% range. Suddenly from 5 pm through 9 pm torrents of rain would appear and drenched him, but he kept on going to get close to his goal of 40+ miles (actually accomplished – 41) and because there was no place to find shelter. He reported he had two instances where men gave him money or food and coffee.

Mr. Machida shared that during the downpours, he faced a spiritual fight. He was cold from being thoroughly soaked, and had a very good excuse to stop and seek shelter, but he determined he wanted to keep moving and approximate his goal for the day.

Saturday was a similar fight, but now, it was the heat and humidity as he walked from east of Dayton on through Dayton and thru a suburb named Xenia. The heat factor was close to 100 and Mark Hernandez, Mr. Machida's assistant in these last few weeks of his journey, tried bringing him cold, refreshing drinks as often as possible. Mr. Machida would stop briefly at convenient stores and put a handful of ice under his cap. He accomplished 39 miles that day.

Mr. Machida rose early on September 6 and with much vigor. (He never sets an alarm, but relies on

Heavenly Parent to wake him at His will.) He said he had gotten a much more restful sleep by sleeping on the floor in his sleeping bag, rather than on a soft mattress. On Mr. Machida's mind was the upcoming media opportunities in the town of Washington Court House (WCH), which is a historic village settled by a group of Virginia soldiers who had served under General George Washington in the revolutionary war and received land grants in lieu of money.



The reporter, Harry Wright, was excitedly getting his equipment ready and waiting to meet Mr. Machida at a local favorite restaurant for lunch and to do a video piece for the local TV Station, his own radio program and have another interview by Martin Graham, who writes for the WCH Record-Herald.

“To our surprise, when we pulled into the diner’s parking lot, we were greeted by a group of cheering Columbus Family Church members who had prepared a very nice banner reading ‘Ohio Welcomes Mr. Machida,’” described Mr. Hernandez. “Mr. Machida was so touched by their welcome, that they had driven over one hour and committed their time to come.”

The well-wishers continued to show their appreciation and support by offering Mr. Machida a special donation they had taken at their earlier Sunday Service. “The greatest blessing was that six of the visitors from Columbus chose to stay longer and follow us out to the countryside (where Mr. Machida had cut off his walk to go into town for the interviews) so that they might walk with him for a mile or so,” said Mr. Hernandez. Despite the higher heat and humidity and the loss of more than two hours of walking time, Mr. Machida managed to accomplish 35 miles, which were a few short of his goal for the day.

September 7 was Labor Day, but it wasn't a day of rest for Mr. Machida. He began his morning at

around 4:30 am, southwest of Washington Court House on Old US 35.



At around 6:00 in the morning he met Jim, who was delivering papers. Jim and Mr. Machida began talking and they both got a big surprise. Jim found out that Machida was walking for Rev. Moon, and Machida found that Jim had once lived in DC and delivered papers for the Washington Times! They met each other again down the road when Jim had finished his route and Jim offered to take him for coffee and a rest, but Machida expressed his gratitude and apologized that he couldn't stop.

Later in the day, which grew hotter and stickier, he encountered two women who reported to him that they had seen him on TV and read about him in the news. A while later, two guards who work at the Chillicothe Correctional facility stopped and offered Machida two big bottles of water and told him they had heard Harry Wright's radio interview and story about him. They wanted to show their support in some way, so had brought him water. Avoiding the main interstate-like highways and sticking to the back roads, Machida made his way to Londonderry, Ohio around 8:30 pm, finally accessing US 50 which will now be his route to DC.



On Wednesday, September 9, Mr. Machida decided to switch out his backpack banner for the remainder of his walk to “Walk for Peace” from “Rev. Moon Is Innocent”, based on his judgement that he had already garnered three press events where he made that point perfectly clear.

Mr. Machida's whole route that consisted of US 50, and along the way there was construction going on repairing sections of the roadbed. It was the day for workers to help Machida, even as they worked. Machida was moved by a couple of hardhats offering him multiple bottles of water. Then there was a worker at a convenience store, who while cleaning the parking lot observed Machida and asked him what he was doing. Moved, he brought out a hot, beautiful ham and cheese sandwich for him. Then even in the dark and wet evening a young woman stopped to offer him a ride and when he explained he couldn't accept, she exclaimed “You're amazing!”

On Thursday, September 10, Mr. Machida had another interview. A crew lead by Phyllis Smith was able to interview Mr. Machida. Despite the interruptions he managed to walk 37 miles that day.

*The following is a news article that appeared on a feature on The News Center on September 11, 2015. The writer is Phyllis Smith:*

A Japanese man is walking across America to promote peace and Thursday, he stopped by the Parkersburg area.

Matsuo Machida has been walking between 37-40 miles each day since June to highlight reconciliation and redemption.

His trip wraps up Friday, September 18 in Washington, D.C. He says Parkersburg is an ideal stop because Route 50 is a straight, easy road to follow.

While he was in the area, he visited Parkersburg Mayor Jimmy Colombo in his office at the city building.

“He doesn't say it, but every step to him is like a prayer for him. He's praying for peace, that we can find a peaceful way to deal with things,” says Machida's friend and helper Mark Hernandez.

Machida usually starts walking at three in the morning each day. He is 65-years-old.