

## FFWPU International: 82 Kilometers = 82 Years - Meeting True Mother on the Road

Kenshin Okano  
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Four UPA cadets begin their walking journey from Sun Moon University (from left: Kenshin Okano, Michiyo Horii, Masahiro Aijiwa, Yoshifumi Soejima)

### Walking Devotions by Four Japanese UPA Students

In late September 2025, when the trees were still holding onto their summer green, the landscape before the Seoul Detention Center had already begun to glow with shades of crimson and gold. A chill wind swept in and drove away the lingering heat, making everyone draw their collars close, and it seemed an early frost had settled on the hearts of the gathered members. Amid the barricade of buses and the impassive responses of police officers, a small stirring began - quiet and peaceful. And with each passing day, that quiet stirring swelled. Songs of praise, prayers, tears of resonance and repentance, and earnest supplications began to rise above the world's criticism, causing passersby to stop in their tracks, their hearts touched.

It was then that four young cadets made an earnest decision: "Let's walk to meet True Mother."

And so they walked - 82 kilometers, a distance matching True Mother's age.

Okano Kenshin (28), Soejima Yoshifumi (23), Aizawa Masahiro (24), and Horii Michiyo (23) - four Japanese cadets from UPA (Universal Peace Academy) - chose the open road over family celebrations during Korea's festive Chuseok holiday. True Peace Magazine asked them to retrace their steps to illuminate what moved them to embark on this "walk of devotion," what they experienced along the way, and how the journey changed them upon reaching their destination.

#### Could you give us a brief overview of your walking devotions schedule?

On October 5, 2025, at 8:00 am, the four cadets set out from the Sun Moon University campus in Asan. Around 6:00 pm on the first day, having walked roughly 27 kilometers, they arrived in Pyeongtaek where they spent the night at a nearby *jjimjil-bang* (Korean sauna).

The second day began at 7:00 am. Walking through steady rain, they covered 39 kilometers over the course of the day. By the time they reached Suwon around 11:00 pm, they had been on their feet for 16 straight hours. That night, they stayed at the Suwon CARP center to rest and recover.

On the final day, October 7, they set out from Suwon in the morning and walked the remaining 16 kilometers, arriving at the Seoul Detention Center around 6:00 pm.

Over the span of three days, they walked a total of 82 kilometers - matching True Mother's age - each step offered with heartfelt devotion.



### **What inspired you to plan this walking devotion?**

Originally, I had planned to travel to the United States during the Chuseok holiday with a group of fellow UPA students to take part in fundraising activities. The plan was born out of a sincere desire to support True Mother in any way possible and to offer our wholehearted devotion. However, just before our departure, someone shared the thought, "While True Mother is in the detention center, let us offer our devotion quietly for the time being." After hearing those words, I ultimately decided to cancel the trip.

It was a difficult decision, especially since we had spent such a long time preparing for it. Returning to Japan wasn't an option at that point, as airfares had surged during the Chuseok holiday. So I began asking myself, "What kind of devotion can I offer here in Korea during this period?" While attending a prayer vigil, Yeonah-nim mentioned that "visits to True Mother will not be possible during Chuseok." The moment I heard those words, my heart sank. Chuseok in Korea is a time when families gather and share warm meals, yet True Mother would be spending that time alone. The thought was truly heartbreaking.

Although I knew I wouldn't be able to meet her in person, I resolved to walk to the Seoul Detention Center with a heart full of longing. What began as a lighthearted phrase - "Searching for True Mother throughout Korea" - carried within it a deep and earnest yearning. I also remembered a message I had heard at Cheonshim Won: "Even the smallest acts of devotion are especially needed at this time." That reminder only strengthened my determination. And so, my plan for walking devotion began.

### **A walking devotion - surely it wasn't an easy decision. How did the people around you react?**

Some people around me asked, "Why walk when you could just drive?" or "Wouldn't it be better to offer devotion in another way?" And honestly, they weren't entirely wrong. But my heart was already set. Of all the ways I could express devotion, I felt that walking there myself - as an act of devotion - was the truest and most genuine offering I could make.

Of course, prayer can express the heart - but at that time, I didn't want to offer just a prayer on my knees. I wanted to offer devotion with my whole being. Especially as so many brothers and sisters were feeling weary under the difficult circumstances, I hoped that even if this challenge seemed a bit reckless to some, it might still spark a little courage and hope in their hearts.

I focused on the idea that faith expressed through action is the most sincere form of love we can offer to True Mother. That's why we didn't hesitate. Then, as we calculated the distance from our starting point at Sun Moon University in Asan to the Seoul Detention Center, we were stunned to discover it was exactly 82 kilometers - the same as True Mother's age. The moment we realized that, a shiver ran through my entire body. It didn't feel like a coincidence; it felt like Heaven was walking with us. With every step we took, I could sense Heavenly Parent's presence beside us. And I earnestly hoped that this walking devotion would become a small offering of comfort and hope to our beloved True Mother and the spirit world - and above all, a path of filial piety dedicated to Holy Mother Han.

### **What thoughts came to you along the way?**

As we walked, I found myself thinking of True Mother countless times. Whenever my legs grew numb or the rain came pouring down, her image naturally filled my mind. I wondered, "How much physical and emotional pain has True Mother endured up until now?" "How many tears has she shed for the sake of

humanity?" And whenever those questions arose, my own discomfort felt insignificant.

I kept wondering - Is she still in pain? Is she eating well? My heart was filled with the simple desire to understand, even in the smallest way, what True Mother might be going through. That single thought was what kept me walking, and it was that very heart that carried me all the way to the end. But there was something more. This walking devotion wasn't just a personal resolution - it was also a path of faith I hoped to show the second generation members who would follow after us. I wanted them to see, through my actions, that love for True Mother is not merely an emotion, but a lifestyle expressed through practice.



### **What was the most difficult moment?**

Honestly, all three days were incredibly difficult. But the hardest moment came on the second day. From morning until night, the rain poured without a single break. With every step, water sloshed inside my shoes, and during the final 10 kilometers, I had to push forward through cold winds, completely soaked from head to toe. My body trembled, and my legs no longer obeyed me. And yet, strangely enough, it was in that moment that True Mother came to mind even more clearly. I found myself thinking, "If this pain can resemble even the smallest part of the path True Mother has walked..." That one thought gave me the strength to rise again. The cold was still there, and the rain did not relent, but something warm began to well up inside me. It was longing - and at the same time, gratitude. It was that feeling that allowed me to endure even those most difficult moments, all the way to the end.

### **Could you say something about the companions who walked with you?**

In every difficult moment, I had companions walking beside me. We encouraged one another and even created a little game to turn our hardships into gratitude - something we called the "Gratitude Competition." We gave thanks for having legs to walk with, for having umbrellas, and above all, for the fact that we were not walking alone but together. We were grateful, too, that with every step, we were drawing a little closer to our beloved True Mother.

Though the rain poured down, words of gratitude never stopped flowing from our lips. Even with our shoes soaked through, our path was punctuated with laughter. We played a "penalty game" where whoever lost at rock-paper-scissors had to carry the bags to the next traffic light - another small joy woven into our journey.

As we learned to find gratitude in everything, both great and small, we came to feel Heavenly Parent's warm love surrounding us even amid the harsh conditions. Perhaps that is why, despite the wind and the rain, our hearts remained endlessly warm.

### **Did you meet anyone during your walking devotion?**

We didn't meet many people along the way, but a few who heard about our walking devotion sent us digital convenience-store or café coupons. Messages like "Cheering you on" and "I'll be praying with you" gave us tremendous strength even though they were short. In lonely and difficult moments on the road, those heartfelt gestures lightened my steps again. Through the kindness of strangers, I felt a warm reassurance that Heavenly Parent was watching over our journey. I would like to take this moment to offer my sincere gratitude to everyone who was thinking of us. Their heartfelt support shone alongside our footsteps of devotion - like Heaven's own smile lighting our path.

## What was the most memorable moment?

Two moments remain vividly etched in my memory. The first was when we passed the 40-kilometer mark, and the second was when we finally reached the Seoul Detention Center. When we crossed the 40-kilometer point, a wave of despair washed over me. "We still have half the journey left," I thought. Realizing that I had to walk the same long distance all over again pressed heavily on both my body and my heart. I had to push past my physical and spiritual limits. Yet strangely, in those very moments, True Mother came to mind. As I reflected on her life - walking solely in alignment with Heavenly Parent's Will, enduring hardships far beyond physical pain - the thought of giving up never once entered my mind.

Instead, a quiet resolve took root in my heart, "At the end of this road, I will offer my Hyo Jeong (filial heart) to True Mother." When we finally arrived in front of the detention center, all the exhaustion and emotion I had been holding back surged at once. More than a sense of accomplishment, I was overwhelmed with sorrow at the reality that True Mother - the Mother of all humanity - was here, within those walls.

As I pictured her beyond the fence, my longing turned into tears. "Mother... are you alright? Are you warm enough?" With that single thought, I brought my hands together in prayer. And in that moment, I realized something: True Mother, too, is enduring each day with love, longing for her children. And I understood that what we call Hyo Jeong is the love born within us from the longing hearts of Heavenly Parent and True Parents. That parental longing brings forth our Hyo Jeong - a filial heart to embrace the world.



Arrival at Pyeongtaek

## How did you feel upon finally arriving at your destination?

Since it was during the Chuseok holiday, I honestly thought no one would be at the detention center. But when we arrived, many members were already offering their devotions in front of the detention center. The moment I saw them, all the fatigue of the long journey melted away. I felt, "The path we walked for True Mother was not in vain." In the warm smiles of the members who welcomed us, I could deeply feel the love of family and the solidarity of faith. Of course, there were also people there who weren't members, and at times some even hurled harsh words at us. But quietly, in my heart, I prayed for them, "May these people one day recognize True Mother's value and return to Heavenly Parent's embrace." That day, despite the cold air outside the detention center I felt the warmth of Heaven's embrace. Encouraging one another and praying with one heart, the people gathered that day truly shared a sacred moment as part of Heaven's family.

## How did people respond after you completed the trip?

After we completed the walking devotion, I received messages from so many people. "Hearing your story gave me great strength." "I feel inspired to take on a challenge too." Each and every message felt like a blessing - like encouragement from Heaven. What moved me most was not simply that we walked 82 kilometers, but that the heart behind it reached others, gave them hope, and inspired new acts of devotion. In that moment, I realized something: devotion is never offered alone - it is carried forward and multiplied through love.

## What transformation did this journey bring?

If there's one thing I realized through this journey, it's that while prayer is important, true transformation begins when devotion is put into action. With every step I took, a new hope emerged - and that hope was passed on to others. Devotion doesn't remain only in the heart; when it moves, it warms the world. That is

why I sincerely hope that this small walking devotion will continue to spread, becoming a spark of love and faith in the lives of many brothers and sisters.



*Offering devotions with other members at the Detention Center*

**Do you have any upcoming plans?**

Right now, we are studying theology - learning the Word and cultivating our hearts. When this semester ends, we will be dispatched as Heavenly Top Gun missionaries. Wherever we are sent, we want to live our lives in a way that strengthens our brothers and sisters and becomes a beacon of faith for my family. Above all, I want to boldly testify before the world about our beloved True Mother. Through Heavenly Top Gun missionary work - as well as through YouTube, street outreach, and various other initiatives - I will share Heaven's Will and True Parents' teachings far and wide. Wherever we go, I want to walk a path of faith and practice so that True Mother can say, "That is my son of whom I am very proud."

**What message would you like to share with True Mother?**

True Mother, though I am lacking in many ways, I am your filial son who would gladly do anything for you. Even in a world filled with confusion and in the midst of challenging circumstances, I will stand as a true Cheon Il Guk leader who boldly testifies to you before all people, together with the Inheritors of Heaven's Love and Blessing, Moon Shin-chul and Moon Shin-heung. True Mother, I offer you my heartfelt gratitude. And I love you. With all my heart, I sincerely pray that you will always remain healthy within Heaven's protection and blessings.