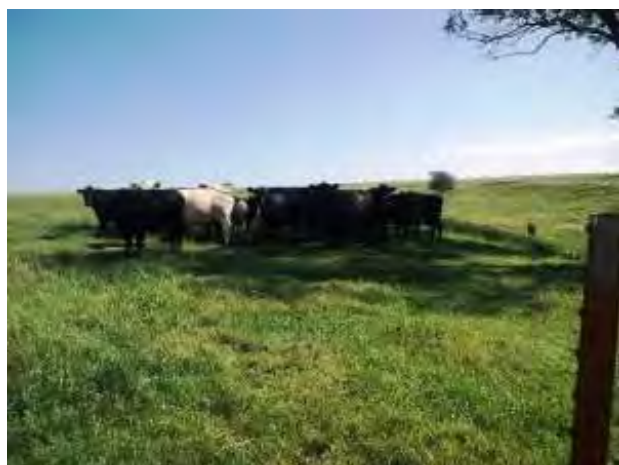


Cross-Country Rev. Moon is Innocent Peace Walk: The Kindness of Strangers

Matsuo Machida
August 18, 2015



Mr. Machida is touched by the support he is receiving on his journey from friends and strangers alike.



“I was thinking to have lunch after I reached the Geographic Center of the United States,” he said, “but just then somebody gave me a lunch bag. He noticed I was Japanese and said, ‘Arigato!’ I was so happy and told him, ‘I’ll never forget you.’ After he left, I opened the bag and it shocked me. There were two tomatoes – my favorite! – and two bananas.”

Mr. Machida also sees signs of good fortune in the nature that surrounds him. He looks to the clouds and finds formations of animals, such as sheep and dragons, that have special meaning to him, and when he passed by a herd of cows, it signaled good

luck for him, as he was born in the year of the ox. He is also awed by the breathtaking number of shooting stars he sees each morning before dawn.

August 13th was Day 50 of this three-month journey. Mr. Machida made the decision the previous night to change his final destination back to his original plan—the Washington Monument in D.C.—rather than New York City. The journey to NYC would have added an extra 310 miles, meaning he would have had to average 40 miles per day with no breaks, and no opportunity to meet people or take extra rest.



“He listens to Heaven’s voice,” said Hiroshi Suzuki, who is accompanying Mr. Machida for one last day. “He listens to his body. He reached his decision. He sees the shooting stars this morning as Heaven’s blessing upon his decision.”

“I counted 26 shooting stars clearly before dawn,” Mr. Machida said that day. “I feel like I rented a planetarium all to myself, but this one is made up of real stars.”



On August 14, Mr. Machida started the day early, rising at 3:30am. He had oatmeal and coffee for breakfast and began his walk near Scandia, Kansas.



Mr. Suzuki, who has been assisting Mr. Machida for the past two weeks, reflected on his last day before the arrival of his replacement, Mr. Yoshimi Yamagata from Omaha, Nebraska.

“It’s hard to sum up my experience with him for the last 12 days since I joined him in Denver Colorado on August 3rd,” said Mr. Suzuki. “It’s been my honor and privilege to serve him. He’s on a mission from

God, and it's an extremely difficult one. I wonder if anyone would walk across America in the future with the same level of faith and conviction that he has."



This walk, according to Mr. Machida, is a Memorial March, dedicated to the third anniversary of the Seonghwa (ascension) of Father Moon. It's a Memorial March.



"A great surprise happened this morning," said Mr. Machida on August 14. "I encountered Reuben, who gave me tomatoes two days ago. He gave me an apple pie and said, "I am praying for your health and happiness!"

Mr. Machida walked 40 long miles that day, and treated Mr. Suzuki to dinner on his last night with him.



On August 15, Mr. Yoshimi Yamagata arrived from Omaha, Nebraska in the early morning. With him arrived gifts and donations from around the nation. Rev. and Mrs. Hiroshi Inose sent GINST 15, a powerful Ginseng extract for health and energy. Mrs. Yoko Lincoln brought a large food donation from the Omaha Family Church.



Mrs. Yoko Lincoln brought a lot of food donation from Omaha community



As Mr. Machida walked out of local gas station store later that morning, the donations continued as two young men handed him a \$10 and \$2 donation. They introduced themselves as Mario and Ringo, and told Mr. Machida that they knew about Rev. Moon.

A police officer also supported Mr. Yamagata by pulling over beside him and handing him a bottle of iced water. “I was so moved by that, I said ‘God bless you!’ many times,” said Mr. Machida.

On August 17, Mr. Machida woke up very early. “This morning God woke me up at 2 a.m., so I had a plenty time to talk with Mr. Yamagata,” he said. “Mr. Yamagata is an elder Unificationist who came to the United States in 1976, three years before I did. We worked together for a certain time back then, so we are happy to meet again. I thank God for letting me work together with Mr. Yamagata again for a week.”

On August 18, Mr. Machida was joined by Kansas Family Church Pastor, Rev. Peeter Saarna, as he crossed the Pony Express Bridge to the historical town of St. Joseph, Missouri, where Mr. Machida met local news reporters, mayor Bill Falkner and deputy mayor, Pat Jones, to talk about the purpose and vision behind his three-month journey.



As usual, Mr. Machida had an early start to his day, and at 9:00am Sean from KQ2 news greeted Mr. Machida and Rev. Saarna, taking photos and videos as they crossed the bridge. Once across, Cecilia Reeves, a Fox News reporter, interviewed them.



“Today is the 55th day, said Mr. Machida on his blog that day. “It is the same number of Japanese baseball player, Hideki Matsui’s, jersey. In Japanese, 55 sounds like ‘Go! Go!,’ which means go forward. I was caught up in this spirit today. After I arrived in the state of Missouri, a TV interviewer came to me and I responded to her in my broken English.”



After his interview, Mr. Machida stopped by the Pony Express museum and took a few photos in front of the building. The Pony Express, a now defunct cross country mail service by horse, was started in St Joseph.

Mr. Machida then hurried to the St. Joseph City Hall and met with the deputy mayor, Pat Jones, who welcomed Mr. Machida and showed him the mayor's beautiful office. Then Mrs. Jones took Mr. Machida outside and presented him with a medallion of St. Joseph, a kind of "Key to the City". She said, "Not everyone gets one of these." Mr. Machida bowed in gratitude, and Mrs. Jones said a prayer for him. She gave her blessing over Mr. Machida and prayed for his protection and safety. She mentioned that Rev. Sun Myung Moon's name was being cleared and exuded a loving, total acceptance of him through her words.





She invited Mr. Machida to a special tea shop called “The Gothic Tea Shop“. Mr. Machida was amazed by the beautiful tea cups, plates and delicious food there, and accepted another interview with a local news lady just before the meal began.





Emily, the news reporter, asked Mr. Machida, “Why are you crossing the United States?” Mr. Machida answered clearly, “I just want to say one thing: Rev. Moon is innocent.” Mr. Machida added, “I walked across the country 11 years ago. Why am I doing it again? I realized that Rev. Moon went to jail for one year and one month. That’s why I came again at this time.”



Soon after, the mayor of St. Joseph, Mr. Bill Falkner, came to see Mr. Machida in the tea shop. Mr. Falkner chatted with Mr. Machida for a few minutes and took photos with him. Heavy rain started to fall, but, always on the move, Mr. Machida started to walk again to his next destination: Cameron, Missouri.



Articles detailing Mr. Machida's mission, supplemented with video interviews, were published yesterday evening on both the St. Joseph Fox news website and St. Joe Channel, their local news website.

