

Making conditions to save the world

Matsuo Machida
September 18, 2015



It is not easy to gauge what is in another heart, especially across the divides of culture and age. We may have some vague sense of what motivates a person, but when that motivation is particularly intense, clear understanding is elusive. For example, many of our members have fasted, and knowing why we did so, we might empathize with others who fast. We probably begin simply fasting with the wish that we could do more to accomplish God's will if we were a purer vessel for him to work through. Denying ourselves food for three days or seven days is like going through a narrow gate through which the spiritual atmosphere that surrounded us before the fast began cannot squeeze. Thus, we might infer that others who fast do so in order to go through just such a rite of passage and make a fresh start.



Chizaru and Amica Quigley serving lunch

Yet, that relatively common experience within our movement seems an insufficient guide to understand what drives those people that have gone to much greater extremes than most of us have. In its December 2006 issue, *Today's World* magazine reported on a Japanese man, Yasuo Inoguchi, who had succeeded in doing a fast that lasted forty days. In fact, he had also done a forty-day fast in 1984 to protest True Father's imprisonment in the United States. In between 1984 and 2006, he had done eight other forty-day fasts. In those twenty-two years, collectively, for more than thirteen months he ate nothing.

The *Today's World* article appeared after the conclusion of his tenth fast but the picture that accompanied the article depicted a group of church leaders, well-wishers and friends surrounding a somewhat plump Mr. Inoguchi at midnight, forty days earlier, at the moment that his tenth fast began. In the front row, off to one side, was one person, Machida Matsuo, who is likely to understand what compels a member to fast for so long and to do such long fasts so frequently.

Recognizing Mr. Machida today, in the photograph, it seems fitting that while most people in the group were sitting, he was standing on the two

feet that have carried him thousands of miles as he trekked across various nations as an expression of his heart and faith, because primarily (it seems) Mr. Machida is a walker.



While traveling West to East, Mr. Machida met a man from England traveling from East to West

In addition to his recent walk from San Francisco to the Washington Monument, which concluded on September 18, on three occasions, Mr. Machida has traveled the length of South Korea, a combined total of a thousand kilometers, on foot. He testified that he had wished to reverse the course that True Parents took, coming south to Busan more than sixty years ago, as darkness descended on northern Korea, sealing it shut for all the decades since. Mr. Machida has walked the length of his native Japan as well (apparently the four main, contiguous, islands) twice, for a total of 7,600 kilometers.

Once before, in 2004, he walked most of the breadth of "the lower forty-eight" (the states that compose the main body of the United States; that is, the US minus Hawaii and Alaska). He walked from San Francisco, California, to Danbury, Connecticut. He began then, as he did this year, at our holy ground, San Francisco's Twin Peaks, accompanied by many members. The group of members in 2004 was so large, in fact, that as they approached the Golden Gate Bridge, the police mistook their peace walk for a protest march. Only after they had convinced the police that they were not attempting to disrupt traffic over the bridge were they allowed to proceed. It took Mr. Machida 103 days to reach Danbury and most of that distance he walked alone. Hot summer had turned to early winter and for every day of that time, he had hiked relentlessly, covering 4,200 kilometers.



Arriving at the Washington Monument

Then, as he did this year, he used a system by which a car-based member loosely accompanied him. This member would arrange media interviews for Mr. Machida, rectify problems with the route, find sleeping accommodations and arrange for members to meet Mr. Machida along the way.

Matsuo Machida hails from Nagano, a city in center of Japan's main island that has experienced twenty earthquakes in the past year. He drives a taxi when he isn't setting walking conditions. His backpack weighed 30 kg and he often walked for fourteen hours a

day. All the facts somehow fall short of the power we suspect lies within the heart of this person.

When Mr. Inoguchi finished his tenth fast, he mentioned seven others in the room that had also accomplished that remarkable feat, forty days without food, "Mr. Tesuya Iida," Mr. Inoguchi said, "fasted with me this time. Mr. Kajikuri has done this twice. Mr. Fuchimoto, four times. Mr. Machida, once. Mr. Yoshino, twice. Chunja-san, five times." We may not easily comprehend what compels such sacrifice, but we can dare believe that it moves God's heart.