The Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk

by Robert Majors

Last month Robert Majors joined the Northwest Interfaith Peace Walk from Eugene, Oregon to Bainbridge, Washington. Here is his reflection:

Walk the world
Humble
As the dove
Gentle
All you do
Justly
Like the serpent
Wisely
And always love
Mercy

July 27th - The volunteers begin our journey at the Catholic Worker in Eugene, Oregon. We prepare our bodies for all that is involved with the Peace Walk, two weeks preceding August 6th. After spending the night recovering from a sudden stomach sickness, I awoke thankful for health and the energy to walk. It’s slow and quiet when we begin to move, old friends greet and new friends meet. There are people here that have traveled from Chile, Japan, California, Canada, and several states. A man starts a conversation with me, we met last year, when I had asked several people to write in my journal. The journal was stolen months later, but luckily I remember the message he had written.

“On these walks you meet many people and you hear their story.”
-Northwest Peace Walker

Standing strong, his legs are bricks
Sweating tears from every inch
All his strength to pull a rope
From the well so deep below
The sun is beating on his neck
His breath is deep with every lift
Bleeding hands are gripping tight
A moment holding on for life

July 28th - The volunteer walkers are in Corvallis, Oregon to walk through the city. This walk is uniquely social because we walk through several cities and each city has a local host who plans our schedule. The day starts at a four-foot-tall Persimmon tree, a descendant of a tree that survived the bombing of Hiroshima on August 6th, 1945. In contemplation, I think of all that still exists as a descendent from that day. People say Native American tribes would consider seven generations ahead before making an important decision. A man once told me a generation is thirty years, that is 210 years of consideration. Next year is the 75th anniversary of the first nuclear weapon used in warfare on a civilian population. How different things would be if everyone considered just one generation?

Two birds yell and perch up high
To motivate one
down below that cannot fly

July 29th - It is our third day of walking. We walk fifteen miles each day and on this day the Peace Walk passes through Salem, Oregon. There is a man with us from Japan, his name means Universe within a Circle. I found him sitting by a river watching the water rolling by. I begin talking to him and he jumps up ready to continue the walk. I was happy to find him in a better mood and picked up a stone from the ground between Seattle and Bainbridge Island. It is a peaceful trip. I sit outside the ship arriving at the large Catholic Worker house in Tacoma, we rest amid quiet conversations and curious residents. Walkers began picking up various instruments and spontaneous music followed, revealing hidden talents from those gathered.

The flower blooms violently
It wants to show you
What you are led to perceive

August 1st - We are taking a ferry between Seattle and Bainbridge Island. It is a peaceful trip. I sit outside the ship watching the water rolling by, I begin talking to Senji; throughout the walk many stories are shared.

The Lucky Dragon - Nuclear abolition and peace movements in Japan became popular long after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Testing of nuclear weapons moved to the Pacific ocean, at places like the Marshall Islands and Bikini Atoll, where its inhabitants were used by the United States as guinea pigs to study (continued on back page)
August 2nd, Suquamish - Today we walk to Chief Seattle's grave. Upon arriving we circle the gravestone and a Japanese woman begins to sing a song of the Native American people. She is usually very quiet, but now I hear emotion in her voice. According to his gravestone, Chief Seattle was baptized Noah Sealth and was a “firm friend of the whites.”

August 3rd – 5th, Ground Zero - Bainbridge Island is home to the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action. ‘Ground Zero’ is the name given to the point above, below, or at which a nuclear explosion occurs, as in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The center shares a fence with one of the largest stockpilers of nuclear weapons in the U.S., Bangor Naval Base. The base serves as the home for the Pacific fleet of Trident submarines. Strategically located throughout the oceans, these submarines maintain readiness to launch a nuclear attack within thirty seconds.

This year marks the beginning of renewed hope for peace. Construction of a peace pagoda on the Ground Zero property was approved by the county earlier this year. Senji has undertaken the task of seeing the peace pagoda construction through to its completion. Thirty years ago the peace pagoda construction was halted after two marines from the base burned down the Buddhist Temple.

I gave the stone to the Universe within a circle guy, he said, “I will keep it until I die.” -Universe within a Circle

Knights of Columbus gives $250,000 to Asylum Seekers

At this year’s annual Supreme Convention, Carl Anderson, the Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, announced a $250,000 commitment to aid asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border.

“We are prepared to expand it, with additional resources, to help those in refugee camps in every border state. . . . Let me be clear: This is not a political statement, this is a statement of principle. This is about helping people who need our help right now. It is a natural and necessary extension of our support for refugees across the world. . . .”

Soup Line Closed:

November 28 - 30, 2019

January 1 - 4, 2020

Knights of Columbus Christmas Breakfast for the Homeless

Wed., Dec. 25, 6:30 a.m.

August 6th- The peace walk ended with a Toro Nagashi ceremony in Seattle. The Toro Nagashi is a lantern ceremony where thousands gather to each place a rice paper lantern into a body of water. A candle is placed in the center for those who have died, it is a moment to communicate with the spirits of our ancestors. The ceremony had speakers including a young poet and an old singer. It is organized annually by the Hiroshima to Hope coordinators. The peace walkers perform a Buddhist ceremony and lead the first lanterns to the water. The sun goes down on our final day.

Robert Majors is a community member of the Las Vegas Catholic Worker, a poet, a musician, and he is pursuing an Engineering Degree at UNLV.