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Kurozumi Sect Brings 150 World Leaders Together to Learn More About Japan's Ancient, Naturistic Faith

With moss-covered origins that root into pre-history, Japan's cloistered, native faith, on November 13, threw a "meet your neighbor" party. Staged with the elegance of a tea ceremony and refined, organizational splendor of a coronation, the Shinto International Workshop on Global Survival dramatized the religion's entry into global thinking. Hands outstretched and hearts opened as an elite assembly heard Shinto's vision of kami - light beings indwelling in nature and nagare, the sacred "flow" in life.

Rev. Muneharu Kurozumi, Sixth Chief Patriarch of the Kurozumikyo sect (the event's sponsor), opened it with a prayer: "we have gathered here to consider the questions of global survival and peace. The air and water have been polluted and the land exploited. Representatives from the major religious traditions as well as the political, journalistic and academic worlds have come here in the hope of finding a way to save the planet. We hope that Shinto can play an important role in promoting environmental awareness internationally. May the kami [devas and deities] hear our prayers..."

"The conference began each day," recalls delegate and Sri Chinmoy devotee Dr. Kusumita Pedersen, "with a meditation at 6 AM to venerate the rising sun, the visible form of Goddess Amaterasu Omikani, the supreme deity of Shinto." Grand Mufti of Syria, American Indian Chiefs, Hindus, Buddhists, a rabbi from Holland, an African and other delegates climbed to an isolated hilltop and sat in the still light of dawn, facing east. After some chanting and silent contemplation, the ceremony concluded when the sun climbed over a row of tall pines.

A beautiful blend of formal talks, informal coffee-table discussion and lovingly personalized hospitality made the forum a joy. Faithkeeper of the Onondaga Nation, Chief Oren Lyons told HINDUISM TODAY: "what impressed Chief Shenandoah and myself was the underlying spiritual reality in the spirit inhabits a rock, a stone, or water.

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