



OUR HOPE FOR MANKIND

MEDITATION
AT THE
UNITED NATIONS

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE
UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP
November 1974 Issue Dedicated to U THANT

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Meditation at the United Nations is a monthly bulletin of the United Nations Meditation Group, compiled basically of transcriptions of the Group's regular meetings which are conducted by Sri Chinmoy.

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UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP



WE BELIEVE

... and we hold that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

Sri Chinmoy

EDITOR'S NOTE

The United Nations Meditation Group was inaugurated on April 14, 1970, when Sri Chinmoy, the eminent Hindu spiritual teacher and philosopher, was invited to conduct its weekly meetings. The Group began its meditations in the Peace Room of the Church Center for the United Nations, but this small room was soon outgrown. Drawn by the immense spiritual wealth of the Master, many new seekers joined the Meditation Group. Coming from every department of the Secretariat as well as from associated organizations and various missions to the United Nations, they were deeply moved by the sublime peace and profound wisdom of Sri Chinmoy.

With its increased numbers and greater activities, the United Nations Meditation Group now meets on Tuesdays at 12 noon in the Chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations and on Fridays at 1:00 p.m. in one of the Secretariat Conference Rooms.

Membership is open to staff members of the Secretariat, delegates and representatives from Missions, Specialized Agencies and accredited NGOs to the United Nations.

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DEDICATION
TO
U THANT

Beloved Brother,
man of silence,
man of peace,
may the Supreme grant your soul
Eternity's Silence,
Infinity's Peace.

— *Sri Chinmoy*

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SOULFUL TRIBUTES
TO
U THANT

I am most grateful to the world leaders who have been gracious enough to respond to my most humble request and offer their commemorations for this book of tributes to our beloved United Nations Pilot U Thant.

Sri Chinmoy

Sri Chinmoy

Spiritual director

United Nations Meditation Group

The Holy Father having learned with sorrow of the death of U Thant wishes me to convey to you his prayerful condolences. His Holiness on various occasions was able to appreciate in a special way the great contribution which this faithful servant of the United Nations Organization so unremittingly made to the cause of peace and brotherhood among men.

*Cardinal Villot
The Vatican*



U Thant is seen with His Holiness Pope Paul VI during the Pontiff's unprecedented visit to the United Nations where he made a special appeal for world peace before the United Nations General Assembly on 4 October 1965.

(Photo: United Nations)



United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim presenting his credentials as Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations to then Secretary-General U Thant on 8 October 1970.

(Photo: United Nations, T.Chen/ARA)

(12)

The following statement was read by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs, Bradford Morse, on behalf of Secretary-General Waldheim at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on 25 November 1974:

I have learned with deep sorrow of the death of U Thant, the third Secretary-General of the United Nations. U Thant became Secretary-General at a time when our Organization was going through a period of deep and unprecedented crisis, which had produced serious divisions and differences among the Member States. It was his first duty to bridge these divisions and differences and to restore calm and harmony.

For ten years he guided the United Nations through a period of change and turbulence. Throughout that time his wisdom and his calm but resolute personality were vital factors in many critical situations. He never hesitated to express himself strongly and forthrightly, especially on matters of principle, yet he retained the confidence of all Member States throughout his period of service.

Both in the political crises which occurred during his time as Secretary-General and in the

development of the economic and social work of the Organization, he displayed courage and total dedication to the United Nations in disregard of any private interests or even of his own physical well-being.

Many of us here became his devoted friends. We admired above all his humanity, his respect for human dignity and his complete integrity. To me he was a personal friend whose wisdom, kindness and generosity I shall never forget. We shall all remember him as a man who gave himself unstintingly to the cause of peace, progress and justice in the world.

The following is the text of the statement Secretary-General Waldheim delivered in the General Assembly in tribute to U Thant on 2 December 1974.

U Thant served the United Nations devotedly for ten years as its third Secretary-General. He gave himself unreservedly to the Organization and was sustained, when the burdens of the Office inevitably began to take their physical toll, by his dedica-

tion, his deep inner faith and spiritual discipline and by his determination to do his duty.

It is no secret that when he left the service of the Organization at the end of 1971, U Thant was physically exhausted and ill. To the joy of all his friends, he regained his health and vigour and devoted himself to writing his memoirs. Then, tragically, he was stricken again. This time, his will and his unshakeable optimism were not enough. He died on 25 November.

U Thant became Acting Secretary-General of the United Nations on 3 November 1961, to complete the unexpired term of Dag Hammarskjöld, who had died in an air crash six weeks earlier. He assumed office at a time when the Organization was going through a period of deep and unprecedented crisis related especially to the developments in what was then the Congo and is now Zaire. The Office of the Secretary-General was at the heart of this crisis, which had produced very serious divisions and differences of opinion among the Member States.

It was U Thant's first duty to try to bridge these divisions and differences, to restore calm and harmony to the over-heated atmosphere of controversy which had prevailed during the previous year and to set the United Nations on a course which would maintain its relevance and usefulness in the

new conditions of the 1960's. In a turbulent period of change, this was a tremendous challenge.

The developments in the Congo were a major preoccupation for two more years. In the fall of 1962, the Cuban missile crisis presented the most dangerous potential confrontation of nuclear Powers that had ever occurred. U Thant played a crucial role in the resolution of this most dangerous of crises. Early in 1964, the United Nations became involved in keeping the peace in Cyprus—then, as now, an island torn by violence and discord. In 1965, when full-scale war erupted between India and Pakistan, U Thant went to the sub-continent to negotiate a cease-fire. At about the same time also, the tragedy of Viet-Nam, in which the United Nations was never directly involved, began to assume its historical momentum. U Thant made a long personal effort to help in ending the Vietnamese tragedy. In 1967, there was renewed war in the Middle East. In early 1971, the war clouds gathered again in the South Asian sub-continent and the situation dominated U Thant's last months as Secretary-General.

In all of these events, the quiet but resolute personality of U Thant was an important factor. He was so unassuming, so outwardly calm and so lacking in the desire for instant public recognition that his effectiveness in times of crisis has tended to

be minimized or forgotten. He was never afraid to speak his mind on difficult issues, and to pursue, without fear or favour, the course which he believed to be right. That the community of nations not only accepted this, but unanimously voted him to continue in office, is the highest tribute to his integrity and character.

No one will ever know the intense internal struggle which U Thant's discipline and his deep faith concealed from the public gaze. He was occasionally even reproached for his calm. His medical history, which he concealed as far as possible, tells another story—the story of a good and disciplined man doing his best to perform one of the most difficult jobs in the world, and privately enduring the extremes of fatigue, worry and frustration.

U Thant never allowed himself to complain about the difficulties of his job. But at the end of his ten years, to the United Nations Correspondents' Association in September 1971, he did allow himself to comment on them. I shall quote just two passages which describe his approach to the formidable problems and frustrations of the Secretary-Generalship:

“No Secretary-General can afford to lose a sense of obligation to the human community in its broadest sense—an obligation

to give his utmost to make the principles and aims of the Charter a reality and to do whatever he can to improve the general condition of the community of nations.

"The other quality which a Secretary-General can never afford to lose is an urgent sense of political realism."

In the same speech he described his concept of his job as follows:

"There is no easy way to discharge the duties of the Secretary-Generalship, but that does not detract from the immense privilege of being allowed to attempt the job. In my view, it is the most varied, most interesting and most challenging political job on earth. In one way, the Secretary-General is fortunate, for he is allowed to consider the problems of peace and war, the problems of the present and the future of mankind, from a position which is, and must be by its very nature, independent of national considerations. Impartiality, principle and objective truth are his strongest weapons. He is, and must be, at the same time a realist and a man of idealism and

hope, with his mind more concentrated on a better future than preoccupied with a baneful past."

Like anyone else who occupies a leading position in public life, U Thant's reputation and public standing went through a series of fluctuations. It will be a long time before the full record is revealed and a thorough evaluation of his achievements can be made.

Apart from the overwhelming pressures of the political side of his job, U Thant was passionately interested in the work of our Organization in economic and social development and in humanitarian matters. During his Secretary-Generalship this side of the United Nations developed on a scale and in new directions far beyond the expectations of the founding fathers. U Thant was an untiring supporter of this development and never ceased to warn the international community of the dangers of a failure to co-operate urgently on global economic and social problems. His warnings are even more relevant to the situation in which we find ourselves today.

U Thant was above all a humane man with a passionate respect for human dignity and for the value of the individual in an increasingly complicated and crowded world. His integrity and his

courage were rooted in his firm Buddhist faith and in an unshakeable belief in humanity and in the necessity of improving the quality of the lives of all mankind. We remember him for his achievements and for his difficulties in presiding over our Organization for ten tumultuous years. We also remember him as a man of wisdom, integrity and courage who gave himself unstintingly to the service of the United Nations in the cause of peace, justice and progress in the world.

U THANT AS I KNEW HIM

During the last few weeks tributes to U Thant have poured in from all parts of the world. Secretary-General Waldheim admirably summed up U Thant's contribution to the work of the United Nations and his character as a human being in the following words:

"Both in the political crises which occurred during his time as Secretary-General and in the development of the economic and social work of the Organization, he displayed courage and total dedication to the United Nations in disregard of any private interests or even of his own physical well-being. Many of us here became his devoted friends. We admired above all his humanity, his respect for human dignity and his complete integrity."

I have asked myself the question what was the key to U Thant's dedication to the United Nations and to his human qualities of modesty, serenity and integrity. I believe that the key is to be found in the fact that U Thant was a deeply religious person, and a devout Buddhist. I put them in that order because U Thant's religiousness came before his personal faith as a Buddhist. Indeed U Thant used to say that there was not much difference between



U Thant with C. V. Narasimhan

(Photo: United Nations)

a good Buddhist, a good Christian, a good Hindu, a good Jew, or a good Moslem. It was his strong belief that the basic precepts of these great religions, which had so much in common, were applicable to the work of the United Nations. It was this conviction that led him to invite His Holiness Pope Paul to visit the United Nations and address the General Assembly in 1965.

U Thant was a Buddhist, but not a fanatic. Indeed one could not conceive of his being fanatical on any subject, except perhaps in respect of his total commitment to the Charter of the United Nations. From his religion derived his modesty and humility. It was these qualities which made him repeatedly assert in the course of 1966 that he would not be available for a second term as Secretary-General. He used to say that no person should aspire to a second term as Secretary-General. His calmness in times of crises bordered on nonchalance and was in fact sometimes even criticized when it was mistaken for indifference. His total serenity in his personal relations was no doubt the cause of his ulcers; although his doctors advised him to 'explode' now and again it was inconceivable that he would, even to save his health.

U Thant's integrity was universally recognized. Of this quality of his, I may recall a statement

made by Lord Caradon at the twentieth anniversary of the United Nations in San Francisco:

"We believe in no man's infallibility, but it is restful to be sure of one man's integrity."

When I saw him in February of this year, he told me even then that he did not believe he could last very long. He had been in great pain for practically the whole of this year, with several visits to the hospital, one surgery after another, and repeated chemo-therapy, which he found exhausting. He bore his illness with fortitude and without a word of complaint. In view of his illness and the difficulties of speech that it entailed, he was most unwilling to receive visitors. The last time I saw him was on Saturday 24 August. At that time, as always, his mind was clear, and his handshake firm. He told me that once the publication of his memoirs had been arranged and the chemo-therapy concluded, he intended to go back to his native Rangoon. So much for his plans, which could be fulfilled only after his death.

I heard from members of his family that on Monday 25 November, a few minutes before he passed away, he awoke from his coma and asked his daughter what time it was. His daughter told him. I am sure he knew that his time had come, and he had no intention of keeping the Lord

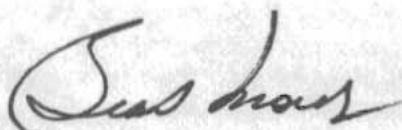
waiting for him. He was always such a punctual man.

Such was U Thant, a wonderful human being of rare goodness. One of his friends said: "Fortunate are those who crossed his path. May he rest in peace!"

C V Narasimhan

*C. V. Narasimhan
Under-Secretary-General
for Inter-Agency Affairs and Co-ordination
United Nations, New York*

I am pleased to know that the November issue of the United Nations Meditation Group bulletin will be dedicated to the memory of former Secretary-General U Thant. This will indeed be a splendid tribute to a great and humble man whose dedication to peace and devotion to the improvement of the human condition earned the everlasting gratitude of all mankind.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Brad Morse", with a large, sweeping initial "B".

*Bradford Morse
Under-Secretary-General
for Political and General Assembly Affairs*

We are saddened by the death of U Thant, a distinguished servant of the international community. He took over the job as Secretary-General of the United Nations in tragic circumstances following the death of Dag Hammarskjöld. U Thant saw the United Nations through some of its most difficult years, yet he was never discouraged. He devoted himself wholly to the cause of world peace. Peace was his passion. He was tireless in the search for accord among nations and never spared himself in the office of Secretary-General. In the noblest sense of the word he was an impartial servant of the world.

We send our condolences to his family. The world has lost a great leader.

*U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C.*

Many have served their nation. Few have served their world. And none served the world better than U Thant. He left us, above all, the example of his life: the ever-shining lesson that mankind can look across national barriers and discover its common humanity.

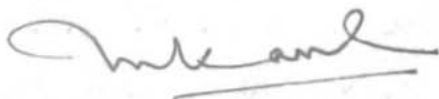
*Nelson Rockefeller
Vice President of the
United States of America*

The Government and People of Canada mourn the death of U Thant, a distinguished son of Burma. In his years of service as United Nations Secretary-General, U Thant demonstrated total and selfless dedication to the organization and through it, to the betterment of mankind.

*Pierre Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada*

U Thant served the world community with rare distinction and understanding of the hopes and aspirations of peoples in different parts of the world. He was a firm believer in human dignity and brotherhood. U Thant realised that, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, "Peace is indivisible; so is Freedom, so is Prosperity now, and so also is Disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments." He also knew that 'the consequences of acting in a passion are always bad for an individual; but they are indefinitely worse for a nation'. It is not surprising, therefore, that he brought a great vision and a deep sense of compassion to bear on the solution of intricate international problems. These qualities combined with a deeply felt commitment to social justice and practice of meditation gave him the inner strength to bear the awesome burden of one of the loneliest jobs in the world and to face with equanimity the many crises which confounded the world community during the ten years of his tenure as Secretary-General of the United Nations. India was one of the first countries to recognise his outstanding contribution to the promotion of peace and international understanding by conferring on him in 1965 the first Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. I have no doubt that

his life and work will serve for many years to come as a beacon of light and a source of inspiration to increasing numbers of people in our world which he did so much to bring together in peace and harmony.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T. N. Kaul', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

T. N. Kaul
Ambassador of India to the
United States of America
Washington, D. C.

The following is a reproduction of a letter to Secretary-General Waldheim from former Mayor of the City of New York, John V. Lindsay.

November 27, 1974

Dear Kurt:

I've just come back from the United Nations and the General Assembly where I stood for a few moments beside the bier of U Thant.

What a sad day and time for the world and for us. I miss him terribly. And the comfort that I have is that his faith was so strong and his consistent and noble practice of his religion so uplifting, that I know he is at peace and with his loved ones.

I hope you will pass along to your colleagues at the United Nations the depth of the City's loss in U Thant's death. I always thought of him as a citizen of our town as well as of the world. My affection for him was profound, and grew over the years as I got to know him better and better. We exchanged private lunches once every two or three months, rotating between his office at the United Nations and Gracie Mansion. It was usually just the two of us alone and we shared ideas and thoughts about



As Mayor of the City of New York, John V. Lindsay offers U Thant a copy of New York, Your Host.

(Photo: United Nations)

the world, civilization and people. His love of peace, of decency and brotherhood was a constant source of wonder and inspiration to me. For it is hard to be in the ugly world of politics, with all of its faithlessness, stupidity and vanity, and retain those simple qualities. I always felt better and prepared for a better world when I left his presence.

As Mayor of the City for eight years, I found a friend, a colleague and faithful helper in all of the things that I tried to do. And one who deeply understood the pressures that I was under.

Most importantly, I found U Thant to be a man and a person of warmth, humor, compassion and understanding.

I'm also comforted by the fact that U Thant's very large shoes have been filled by your good self. It is a different style as it is a different time, but it is all good and I wish you continuing good luck with grateful thanks in all your endeavours.



John V. Lindsay

The people of New York City join their spiritual brothers and sisters in all parts of the world in honoring the achievements of U Thant, the United Nations' esteemed former Secretary-General.

During his ten-year term as Secretary-General, U Thant displayed consistent dedication to the founding principles of the United Nations.

In stormy times, he was an island of calm in a sea of controversy. His meditative ways helped him to maintain the neutrality so necessary to sustaining the confidence of differing nations.

The people of our own nation always respected his ability to mediate differences among the nations, and we always admired his desire to attain justice for all.

The City, which is proud to be the home of the United Nations, will always revere the memory of the Burma-born schoolteacher who guided the world through a particularly turbulent decade in its history.

Let us hope world leaders will always draw inspiration from the quiet strength which characterized the life of Secretary-General U Thant.



Abraham D. Beame
Mayor of the City of New York

The life and work of U Thant is an example and inspiration for Puerto Ricans and all the world's people.

His fight for the cause of peace is a fight we all must take up if man is to rise above his historical limitations to build a just and lasting world society.



Rafael Hernández Colón

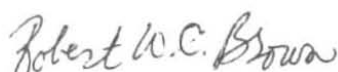
Rafael Hernandez Colon
Governor of the
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico

U Thant, in quiet gentleness, bore the woes and the hopes of mankind within his own being. It was his greatness that he could feel the suffering of the masses of mankind, yet never abandon his soaring hope for their succor. His life has been a blazing light in the darkness of our time, a light of peace, a call for justice, a summons to gentleness and mercy, pity, peace and love.

David Gauthier Harrington

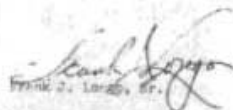
*Reverend Donald S. Harrington
Minister
The Community Church of New York
New York, N. Y.*

Some fortunate people are able to move back and forth from living their lives to philosophic reflection on what they are doing, and then to integrate their philosophy and lives. U Thant, I believe, was of that even more fortunate few whose philosophy has become so much a part of their being that they do not need to move back and forth from philosophy to living; his every thought and action flowed out of a rich and sustaining philosophy of life.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert W.C. Brown". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent 'R' and 'B'.

Robert W. C. Brown
Director
Unitarian Universalist U.N. Office

U Thant was truly a figurehead of peace in our time and sought to reconcile differences through meditation. He was a good man and a man of high principles. His name will live on in the memory of millions as a statesman for peace and the dignity of man.



Frank J. Longo, Sr.

—Frank J. Longo, Sr.
Mayor of the City of Bristol
Connecticut

The profound awareness of the esteemed former Secretary-General U Thant of the deep resources for all humanity. He recognized that life, its very soul, is the core within that humanity. In modest thought he himself lived for all to recognize and hope that in quietness his life truly provided a leadership of vision for all to comprehend that the Love of God on behalf of man was truly his goal, a goal that men and women could seek to achieve within their lives for benefit to all individuals in all nations in an enlarging world.

Mrs. Pearce K. Drake
a friend

I was deeply moved when I had the opportunity to meet U Thant and his family in May 1973, at the time they attended the performance of Sri Chinmoy's play on the life of the Buddha.

A light rain descended as Sri Chinmoy spoke of U Thant's spiritual height and offered his deepest love and blessings to him. U Thant's profound humility and love for the Buddha was expressed as he spoke to us from his soul's depth on this inspiring occasion.

His love for humanity is the constant theme throughout U Thant's significant life of service in the human cause.

Sol Montlack

President

Sri Chinmoy Centre, Inc.

New York, N.Y.

Mr. U Thant—a graceful gentleman and a man of inner peace. It was my esteemed pleasure to have known him.

Robert Tutson

Robert Tutson

Security Officer

United Nations

New York, N.Y.

Others may speak of U Thant as a man of politics and leadership. His years of public service bear witness to his personal dedication, complete unselfishness, and the esteem of eminent peers. Perhaps the United Nations has not had, since its inception, a leader of purer intrinsic humility. His image, as it greeted me from television or in photographs, represented a man of serene inner poise, eyes kind, attentive. In a most odd way this man seemed to express the fragility of our human community; nothing brash, fulsome nor overly confident in him. He seemed always to plead, mildly and intensely, for gentleness, and by his modesty, the egotism and extravagance of other "big-wigs" seemed to show up more glaringly. One sensed, too, his composure: he cared so much, but never lost that calm which alone could unravel the tangles of national competitiveness and personal self-interest.

I had a glimpse of him once in a non-public moment, when, on a drizzling afternoon, he came to attend a series of plays written by Sri Chinmoy about the Buddha. Sri Chinmoy had led a meditation group at the United Nations for a number of years and U Thant was aware of this service and grateful to Sri Chinmoy's encouragement. So on this afternoon, a debut for players and stage, without fanfare, without limousines, body

guards or the other accoutrements that usually accompany and announce a famous man, U Thant slipped into our midst to see these plays.

The stage was a homey, outdoor proscenium which, as the rain increased, became slick and puddled. The wind was chill. It was an afternoon to try the patience to say nothing of the dignity. The umbrellas and canopy above his head did little to ward off the gusty wet. From time to time I turned my head to look at him. He was watching the plays with clear attention. He took off his glasses more than once to wipe them dry, but stayed to the end, through miscues and delays, through poignant and beautifully rendered moments as well, gracing the proceedings.

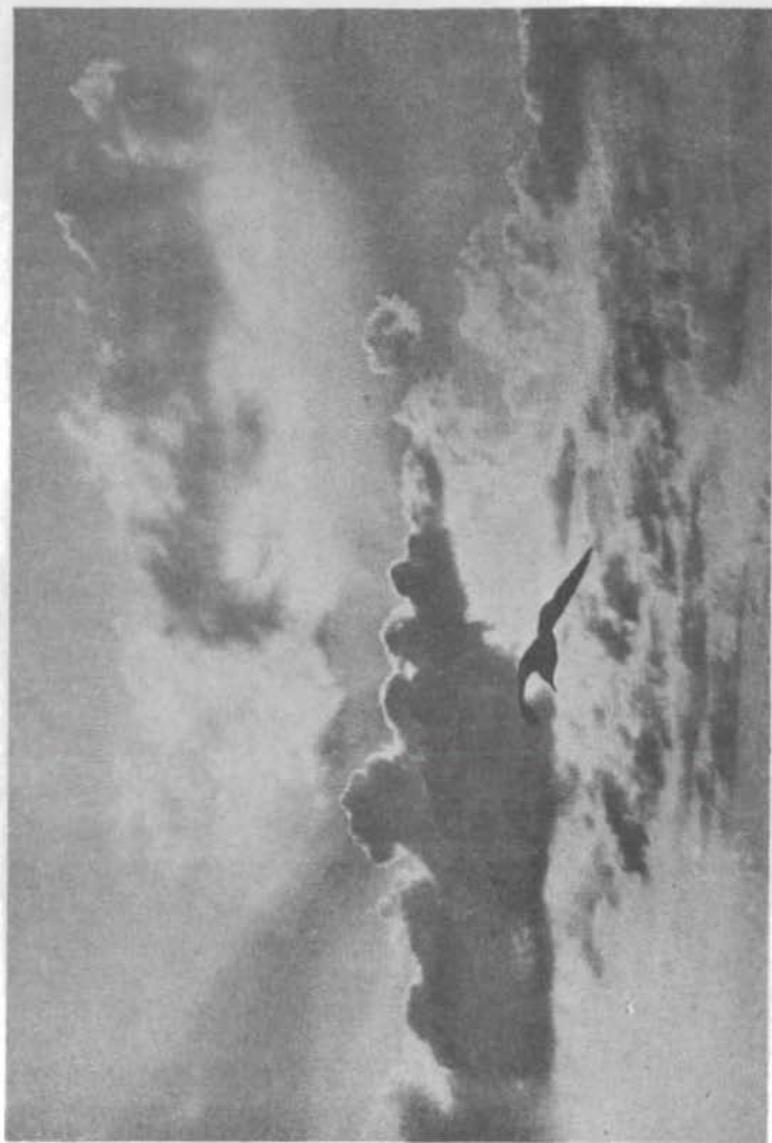
At the beginning, and again at the end, U Thant rose and stood on the stage—this man, mind you, who had stood center stage for an entire planet on more than one perilous occasion. When Sri Chinmoy blessed him, and the spirit of peace he nurtured for the world, U Thant removed his hat. Later, at the close, with the rain now fairly sheeting down, he went back up on the stage to thank us for the pleasure of the afternoon. He had been moved, he said, at what Sri Chinmoy had written and we had performed. He spoke from the heart. We forgot that the weather was inclement.

And he left, slipping away as modestly as he had come. A delicate man, taking time off from a busy world, to honor the sincerity of a fellow servant of God, a lover of Buddha, a brother with him in the fields of peace.

Dr. Peter Pitzele
Professor of Literature
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

COMMEMORATIVE MEDITATION
FOR
U THANT

(43)



(Photo: Yvette Ripplinger)

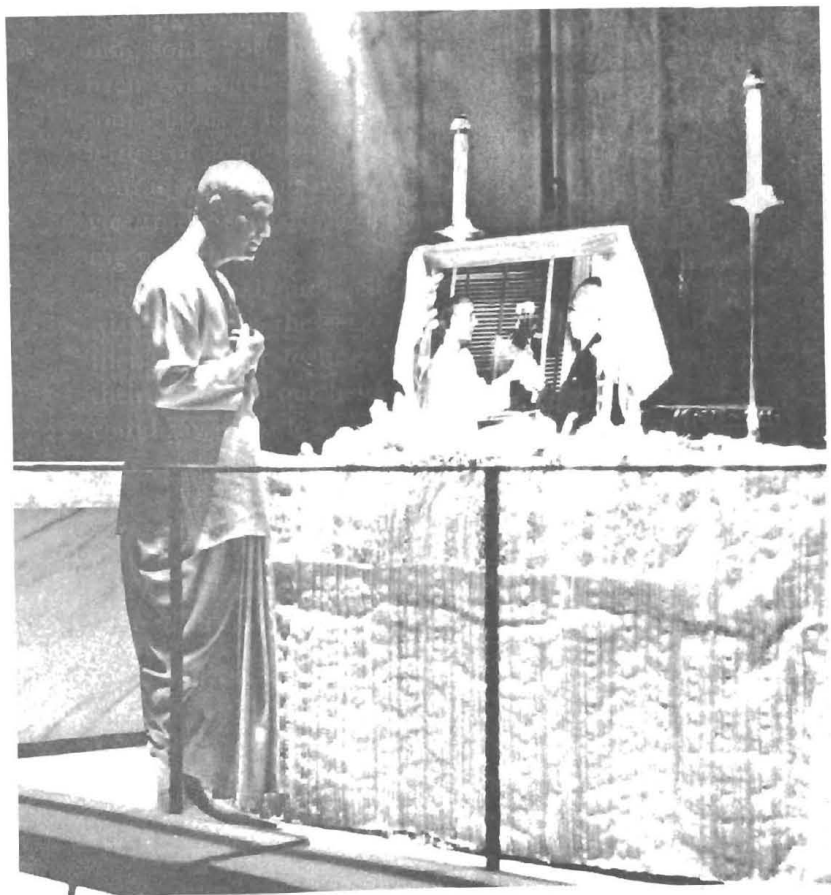
TO U THANT

It is a weightless world
In which a free bird flies,
Rising high, and higher,
Light-filling wings that curve
Softly into the sun.
The clay bird is no more.

Earth is heavy,
Pain fills mind and body,
Intrudes on inner space,
Preys on serenity.
In earth's garden
Amidst the birds of clay
Rise twittering and cries
More quarrelsome than gay,
Peace songs, only
A fleeting moment's grace,
Not fulfilled destiny.

Beyond, reachable peace
In the compassionate
Silence of earth's soul,
Open to the new dove,
Now lone, yet not lonely,
Rising to the true sun,
Home-light, welcoming love
For a quest completed.

Yvette Ripplinger



Sri Chinmoy meditates on a photograph of U Thant during the commemorative service held by the U.N. Meditation Group in the Chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations, November 26, 1974. (Photo: Lelihan)

COMMEMORATIVE MEDITATION
FOR
U THANT

*Chapel of the Church Center for the U.N.
November 26, 1974*

On November 26, 1974, the United Nations Meditation Group held a special meditation in the Chapel of the Church Center for the United Nations in tribute to U Thant, who had passed away the previous day.

In silence the Group meditated on a photograph of U Thant which stood surrounded by flowers on the altar of the Chapel.

Sri Chinmoy offered his prayerful tribute:

"Beloved Brother, man of silence, man of peace, may the Supreme grant your soul Eternity's Silence, Infinity's Peace."

The Master then quietly addressed the Group:

"The passing of our beloved Brother U Thant marks the real death of a colossal hope for the twentieth century. Divinely great he was; supreme-

ly good he is. The greatness of his earth-height his body-consciousness is carrying. The goodness of his Heaven-Delight his soul has left for us, for Mother Earth to claim as her very own and treasure forever and ever.

"We, the members of the United Nations Meditation Group, have a special place for him, for our beloved Brother U Thant, in the inmost recesses of our gratitude-heart, for he has helped us unreservedly with his aspiring heart and with his illuminating soul, both inwardly and outwardly. We have been extremely fortunate in being blessed by his soul's light. I have received from him quite a few letters of deepest light and profoundest wisdom encouraging us and inspiring us to be of greater service to the soul of the United Nations and to aspiring mankind.

"From the United Nations Meditation Group I wish to invite the seekers who would like to offer their heartfelt feelings to honour and perpetuate the memory of our beloved spiritual Brother. If you could say just a few words I would be very grateful."

The following were among the tributes that were offered in the Chapel:

U Thant was one with the soul of the United Nations, which is the soul of mankind. He lived and worked for the enlightenment, freedom and unification of mankind in all that he did. Out of his own divinity he created a bridge between humanity and the Supreme—the Father of us all. His service to man is not ended with his passing, because it will persist forever, proceeding out of his own spiritual stature. It is only universalised, transformed to a greater and more powerful dimension. The touch of sadness in his going comes from his own sadness that he was unable to serve more, do more, to be received more fully by mankind. We will all endeavour to take up more effectively the little part that we may play in realising his dream of human enlightenment and liberation.

Donald Keys
United Nations Representative
World Association of World Federalists

The United Nations Meditation Group owes its beginnings and its growth to the blessings of U Thant, who has now attained Nirvana, the supreme state in Buddhism. Let us pay our homage

to that great personality, who has now gone beyond name and form and has, perhaps, merged with the Universal Consciousness.

Everyone knows that U Thant was a living embodiment of Buddhism. To him religion was the realization of its ideals. He believed and practised the ideals of perfection. He advocated universal compassion and unbounded love towards all living beings, the practice of truth and non-violence for the survival of the human race. He believed in the oneness of all beings, so much so that to hurt another was to hurt himself. His strength sprang from his devout religious faith in Buddhism and its high ideals. As Secretary-General of the United Nations he brought the application of these high ideals, which conformed with the main principles of the United Nations Charter, to the successful working of that world-body. He worked for peace and the well-being of humanity at large and the unity of nations.

May his soul rest in peace is our prayer.

Krishna Ganesan

A few months before U Thant's term was up at the United Nations I was privileged to meet him in

his office. We had a very short interview and then, as I stood up, for a brief moment I looked into his eyes. I felt I was in front of a man who was spiritually accomplished, like being close to a Buddha, someone very high...

Yvette Ripplinger

During the last two years of U Thant's service I was able to see a feeling of holiness surrounding him, so even though I was unaware of all his achievements, still I was able to know he was a great soul. And to his great soul, on behalf of all of us—the United Nations staff and the U.N. Meditation Group—I offer my deepest gratitude.

France Vacher

I remember U Thant's last speech to the staff. For a Secretary-General of a world organisation, he did say a few very important things. He said perhaps too much emphasis was given to the intellectual achievements and that in a gradation of achievement, the highest level is the spiritual, ethical value of a person. In judging people that was

the criteria that should be applied. His last speech was a legacy to the United Nations.

Leone Muller

While working in the Documents Section during the 1973 General Assembly, I came across the speeches given on former Secretary-General U Thant's retirement. I was deeply moved by certain sections of these speeches, which made me aware of the humility he embodied in his personal relationships and of the vastness of his spiritual vision.

The first section was by the Chairman of the Staff Committee, Dr. N.G. Rathore:

"You are as much at home with a group of visiting children as you are with a Head of State, and you treat both with equal courtesy and careful attention ... I cannot claim to know much about Buddhism, but I hope you will permit me to say, with the greatest sincerity, that your conduct, your example and your personal life are a tribute to that great religion and philosophy."

U Thant, in reply, said:

"... above all, I would attach the greatest importance to spiritual values, spiritual qualities ... I have in mind the spiritual virtues, faith in oneself, the purity of one's inner self which to me is the greatest virtue of all. With this approach, with this philosophy, with this concept alone, we will be able to fashion the kind of society we want, the kind of society which was envisaged by the founding fathers twenty-six years ago."*

Kevin Keefe

**The complete text appears in Staff Committee Bulletin 281.*

(54) BLANK

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD
LECTURE

(55)



U Thant, as Acting President of the fourteenth session of the General Assembly, seated beside then Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on the presidential rostrum at the United Nations on 1 October 1959.

(Photo: UNATIONS)

DAG HAMMARSKJOLD LECTURE

Sri Chinmoy delivered the following lecture in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium on Thursday, 12 December 1974, as part of the continuing Dag Hammarskjold monthly lecture series sponsored by the U.N. Meditation Group:

THE CHOSEN INSTRUMENT OF GOD

U Thant was a chosen instrument of God.
U Thant was a chosen instrument of man.

God gave him His Compassion-sky to offer to man. Man gave him his suffering-sea to offer to God.

U Thant started his earthly sojourn as a Rangoon, Burma Buddha-son. The Absolute Supreme gradually made him into a universal Wisdom-son and a universal Blessing-gift.

To us, peace is something that belongs in a dream-land. Since it belongs to dream-land we talk about it. To U Thant, peace is something that belongs to the reality-world. Therefore he lived in

the reality-world of peace and was a solid and treasured member of the reality-peace-world.

To us, oneness is something that we seem to want but do not actually feel the need for. To U Thant, oneness was something of constant need, something indispensable. His heart cried for this oneness and the Lord Supreme, the Author of all good, fulfilled his heart's burning desire.

The United Nations gave U Thant the opportunity to speak to the world-body as a supreme leader of mankind. In return, U Thant gave to the United Nations the message of the world-mind-illumination, of the world-heart-perfection and of the world-life-satisfaction.

U Thant was the supreme choice of the United Nations, and God was pleased. But God wanted U Thant to please Him more. Therefore, he made U Thant a pioneer voice of light from the higher worlds.

Simplicity, purity and integrity he was. He was a child's simplicity. He was a saint's purity. He was a God-lover's integrity.

He struggled calmly. He suffered ceaselessly. He hoped sleeplessly. Again, he knew how to dream of success. He knew how to become the river of progress.

We feel that man is bad, imperfect and undivine. His conviction was that man is good,

perfect and divine, for that is what each individual in the inner world eternally is.

U Thant's life of humility was the result of his heart's nobility. His heart of nobility was the result of his soul's unparalleled divinity.

Sincerity spoke through him, integrity breathed in him, spirituality walked with him. He knew the world-problem: ignorance. He knew the world-answer: meditation, and this he practised in silence.

God practised His silence-meditation in and through U Thant. God practised His sound-dedication in and through U Thant.

U Thant was at once God-Humility and man-dignity. He was at once man-frustration and God-Illumination. He was at once the soulful son of God and the faithful slave of man.

Self-demonstration he ruthlessly shunned. Self-perfection he practised. God-Perfection he sought to embrace and treasure. Before him the United Nations was great, divinely great. With him, after him, the United Nations has become supremely good.

In the inner world he was God's Promise, God's Promise to the outer world. In the outer world he was man's confidence, man's confidence in becoming a dedicated instrument of the inner world.

Earth gave him the responsibility. Heaven knew it and saw it. Heaven gave him the authority but, unfortunately, earth did not know it or did not care to know it. His heart of brotherhood was misunderstood. His life of sacrifice was not valued. But his vision of oneness-goal will eternally be pursued by aspiring humanity.

An Asian seed he was. A world-fruit he has become and forever and forever he shall remain.

U THANT'S LETTERS
TO
SRI CHINMOY

(61)



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

29 November 1971

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I am most grateful for your kind expression of concern for my indisposition. Thank you so much for your beautiful flowers which have brightened my stay in hospital. I am feeling much better and looking forward to resuming my activities.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'U Thant'.

U Thant

(61)

U THANT

c/o United Nations
Room 3800
Box 20, Grand Central Post Office
New York, N.Y. 10017

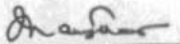
April 10, 1972

Dear Reverend Chinmoy:

I am most appreciative of your kind letter of April 3, 1972 which I received along with a colored photograph while you were chanting blessings on me. You have indeed instilled in the minds of hundreds of people here the moral and spiritual values which both of us cherish very dearly. I shall always cherish the memorable occasion of our meeting at the United Nations.

Thanking you for your very kind sentiments,

Respectfully,



U Thant

UT/bf

(63)

U THANT

23 January 1973

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I thank you most sincerely for your kind message on the occasion of my birthday. I am deeply touched by your thoughtfulness.

Let me take this opportunity of renewing my very best wishes and warm regards.

With admiration,

Anaugthar

UT:tkb

(64)

U THANT

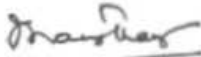
April 19, 1973

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I am most grateful for your kindness in inviting me to attend a stage performance Siddhartha becomes the Buddha on Friday, May 25 in White Plains. I wish I could immediately accept your kind invitation, but as of this moment I have a plan to be in Chicago during the last week of May. If I can get out of this commitment, I shall be delighted to be present on that occasion. Let me write to you as soon as my schedule is firm.

I am also most appreciative of your thoughtfulness in sending me a copy of the play, as well as other copies of your collected spiritual statements.

With my warm esteem,



U Thant

UT:tkc

(65)

U THANT

April 25, 1973

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

Thank you very much indeed for your second letter of April 21.

My schedule for the month of May is now firm, and I am very happy to be able to tell you that I will be present at the performance of Siddhartha becomes the Buddha on the evening of Friday, May 25 in White Plains.

I am eagerly looking forward to the occasion.

With my warm esteem,



U Thant

UT:tkb

(66)

U THANT

June 11, 1973

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I was deeply touched by your kind letter of June 6, 1973, which I received along with a beautiful album of photographs taken on that memorable occasion on the evening of May 25, 1973.

I shall always cherish the happy memories of that delightful occasion.

With my very best wishes and respect,



U Thant

UT:tk

(67)

U THANT

March 25, 1974

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I just want you to know how appreciative I am for your kindness in sending me those lovely flowers which cheered me up during my moment of illness in the hospital.

I am now recuperating and hope to recover my health in a few weeks time.

Sincerely,

Thant
April 15.
U Thant

UT: tks

(68)

U THANT

May 10, 1974

Dear Revered Sri Chinmoy,

I thank you so much indeed for your very kind letter of May 3, 1974, which I received together with a bound volume of the 1973 issues of the U.N. Meditation Group's monthly bulletin. I look forward to reading it as soon as I am fit enough to do so.

After two major operations I am still receiving chemo-therapy treatment and, of course, I am doing meditation every day. I am confident that I will fully recover my health in a few months time.

Needless to say, I am deeply touched by your prayers, love and concern for my health.



U Thant

UT:tk

(69)

U THANT

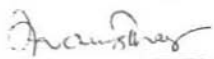
June 28, 1974

Dear Sri Chinmoy,

I was deeply moved by your kind letter of June 21, 1974, which I received together with a copy of "Meditation at the United Nations". I was particularly touched to know that you and your group have been praying for my health while I was in the hospital, and for this I am most grateful. I am now recovering, although slowly and on doctor's advice I am still not receiving any guests.

I am so glad to know that "Siddhartha becomes the Buddha" was recently performed by a group of young ten-year old students from a school in New Jersey. I wish you continued success in your propagation of the moral and spiritual values which are so essential to everyone.

With my sincere esteem and appreciation.



U Thant

UT:tkb

(70)

INTERVIEW BETWEEN
U THANT
AND
SRI CHINMOY

(71)



U Thant receives flowers from Sri Chinmoy during their first meeting, which took place on the thirty-eighth floor of the United Nations Secretariat, New York, on February 29, 1972.

(Photo: Agni)

INTERVIEW BETWEEN
U THANT AND SRI CHINMOY
United Nations, New York, N.Y.
February 29, 1972, 11:30 a.m.

The Secretary-General and Sri Chinmoy greeted each other with folded hands at the door of the room where the interview was to take place, and then U Thant invited Sri Chinmoy to come in.

U Thant: "Sri Chinmoy, please come in. I have been hearing about you from many, many people. Whoever speaks to me about you is all appreciation and admiration and I personally feel that you have been doing a most significant task for the United Nations. I have been observing it from the very beginning."

Sri Chinmoy: "It is most kind of you to tell me all this. I am most grateful to you. Before our short interview, may I invoke the Lord Buddha to bless us? You are a most devoted child of the Lord Buddha and I have the greatest admiration and adoration for him."

U Thant: "Yes please, please chant."

Sri Chinmoy chanted three times:

Buddham sharanam gacchami
Dhammam sharanam gacchami
Sangham sharanam gacchami

[I go to the Buddha for refuge.
I go to the Dharma for refuge.
I go to the Order for refuge.]

U Thant was silent for some moments, deeply moved.

U Thant: "I have not been able to see you before, please forgive me. Because of my heavy schedule and politics, my inner life was not coming to the fore for me. That is why I hesitated a little to see you. Today I am seeing you and I wish to say that all I have heard from others about you is absolutely true."

Sri Chinmoy: "The world knows you as a champion of peace. Being a spiritual man, I wish to tell you that in the inner world too you are something really great. Now that you are physically away from the outer battlefield you will be able to see the world situation with your intuitive light and you will make a contribution in the inner world that will be most effective and most fulfilling."

U Thant: "I am so happy to hear that. This is what I wanted. Now I will be writing my memoirs

and I need a peaceful life. My memoirs will be different, totally different, from the memoirs that others write. Here I want to show how spirituality and philosophy can lead and guide politics."

Sri Chinmoy: "This is the thing that only you can do because in you I see a true seeker of Truth, Peace, Light and Bliss. I know nothing about politics, but I do feel that politics has to be guided by spirituality and philosophy. What you are saying, most revered Brother, gives me immense delight."

U Thant: "I pray to the Lord Buddha for a continuous success in your mission in spreading God's Peace and Light on earth."

Sri Chinmoy: "I appreciate and admire you, not only as a great lover of mankind, but as a most devoted, dedicated child of God who wants to bring God's wealth from the inner world and offer it to his brothers and sisters."

U Thant: "It has been a great privilege for me to see you. Please feel my sincere respect and sincere concern for what you are doing for mankind."

Sri Chinmoy: "Please feel my deepest joy and pride in you and my most soulful gratitude for what you have done for the United Nations and also for the entire world."

As Sri Chinmoy left, he and U Thant saluted each other with palms joined together, in *pranam*.

(76) Blank

PERFORMANCE OF
"SIDDHARTHA BECOMES THE BUDDHA"
Old Mill Farm, Harrison, N.Y.
May 25, 1973

On the evening of May 25, 1973, U Thant attended the first performance of Siddhartha Becomes the Buddha, a series of one-act plays based on incidents in the life of the Lord Buddha, written by Sri Chinmoy and performed by his disciples on an outdoor stage built for the occasion at Old Mill Farm in Harrison, New York. U Thant was accompanied by his daughter, son-in-law and young grandson.

Sri Chinmoy opened the programme by singing:

*Buddham sharanam gacchami
Dhammam sharanam gacchami
Sangham sharanam gacchami*

* * *

Sri Chinmoy then gave a speech of welcome and garlanded U Thant:

"When I go to the Buddha for refuge,
He blesses me.

"When I go to the Inner Law for
refuge, He illumines me.

"When I go to the Order for refuge,
He utilises me."

"A child of Bihar, a son of India, a citizen of the
world, a denizen of the higher spheres: Sid-
dhartha, the Buddha.

"In the outer world He is known as the Light of
Asia. In the inner world He is, indeed, an
ever-illuminating Light of the universe.

"To the world-sorrows He offered His heart of in-
finite Compassion. To the world-aspiration He
offered His soul of transcendental Illumination.

"The Omnipotent did two things. Through
Siddhartha Gautama, He revealed the ideal of
Perfection in a human being. Through the
Buddha, He revealed His Enlightenment and
Compassion in a Divine Being.

"With His Heart, the Unfathomable came to the
Buddha.

"With His Mind, the Unknowable came to the
Buddha.

"With His Bliss, the Transcendental came to the
Buddha.

"This evening we are deeply honoured and blessed by the gracious presence of our most esteemed Brother, U Thant. Two thousand five hundred years ago the World-Father, the Buddha, came with the Message of universal Peace. Now, two thousand five hundred years later, He has sent His chosen son, U Thant, to offer the same Message of Peace.

"Dear Brother, for ten long years you have served the world-consciousness most devotedly and most significantly through the world body of the United Nations. Mother Earth and Father Heaven have bestowed their choicest blessings on your devoted head, aspiring heart and illumining soul. The outer political world has lost you, but the inner spiritual world has gained you and claims you as its very own. Your silent life of aspiration, dedication and illumination is guiding the outer world and leading it to its destined Goal.

"With deepest joy and gratitude I am dedicating this play, *Siddhartha Becomes the Buddha*, as a humble token of my treasured feeling towards you. In you I feel the pioneer-pilot of world-peace. In you I see a beacon-light of world-redemption. And in you I discover true love of human life and an utmost reverence for Truth, both in the inner world and in the outer world.

"The Absolute Supreme claims you as His very own. The Lord Buddha claims you as His very own. We, your brothers and sisters of this world, claim you as our very own."

U Thant replied:

"Revered and highly esteemed Sri Chinmoy and brothers and sisters, it is a great privilege to be able to participate in this spiritually rewarding experience. And for this I am most grateful to our esteemed teacher, Sri Chinmoy, for this innovative undertaking. I also feel particularly moved and touched by his very gracious blessing bestowed on me.

"Sri Chinmoy very kindly sent me a copy of the play, *Siddhartha Becomes the Buddha*. I have read it with great interest and with great admiration and profit. Of course, it is extremely difficult to depict the important episodes of the life of the Buddha in the course of a few minutes or an hour or so. But I found that Sri Chinmoy has done a most remarkable job in presenting the play in simple language understandable even to the uninitiated. His stress on the basic characteristics of Buddhism—on compassion, love, renunciation, peace—should stimulate the thoughts of leaders of men and leaders of thought everywhere. As you all

are aware, I was brought up as a Buddhist by tradition, by faith and by practice. And I find myself in complete agreement with Sri Chinmoy in his enunciation of the ethical and moral aspects of Buddhism, which in my view should be the basis for each of us in our search for inner light, in our search for truth.

"Sri Chinmoy in his play also has drawn a very vivid picture of the identity between God and Truth, soul and inner Light, which I very much hope will create an abiding interest in these two great religions—Hinduism and Buddhism—which in many ways constitute the key to all great religions. I feel very strongly, as some of my friends know, that only by the practical application of the teachings of great religious leaders, particularly the development of the moral and spiritual aspects of life as Sri Chinmoy has stressed in the play—love, compassion, tolerance, the philosophy of live-and-let-live, modesty and even humility—that only with this approach, only with this method, will we all be able to fashion the kind of society we want, a truly moral society, a decent society, a livable society, which is the goal of all great religions.

"I want to thank particularly those friends who are participating in this play. I wish all of you peace of mind and eternal joy, and particularly the inner joy. Thank you very much, Sri Chinmoy, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you."

PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN
AT THE PERFORMANCE OF
"SIDDHARTHA BECOMES THE BUDDHA"
May 25, 1973



Sri Chinmoy accompanies himself on the harmonium as he sings Buddham sharanam gacchami, Dhammam sharanam gacchami, Sangham sharanam gacchami, which he set to music for the occasion.



Sri Chinmoy garlands U Thant



U Thant replies to Sri Chinmoy's speech of welcome



*During the performance. Seated from left to right:
Sri Chinmoy, U Thant and Donald Keys, United
Nations Representative of the World Association of
World Federalists*



U Thant, accompanied by his family, takes leave of Sri Chinmoy. From left to right: Sri Chinmoy, Mr. Sol Montlack, President of the New York Sri Chinmoy Centre; Dr. Tyn Myint U, Mrs. Aye Aye Myint U, Master Thant Myint U [U Thant's son-in-law, daughter and grandson]; U Thant and Mr. Donald Keys.

(Photos: Sri Chinmoy Centre Photographers)

San Juan, Puerto Rico
January 14, 1975

Dear Sri Chinmoy:

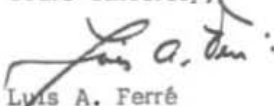
I was very pleased to have received your recent letter asking me to contribute my thoughts to the monthly bulletin dedicated to U Thant. Given my profound respect and admiration for this most enlightened man, it would have been a joy and an honor to have made such a contribution.

I sadly regret that since your letter was delayed in arriving since I have established offices in San Juan and because of the apparent effects of the seasonal mails, I was not in a position to send you my thoughts prior to the deadline for submission.

Nevertheless, I wish to express my sincere hope that this issue be a complete success and my warmest personal regards.

As always,

Yours sincerely,



Luis A. Ferré

Former Governor of Puerto Rico