



SRI CHINMOY:
THE PEACE MEDITATION
AT THE UNITED NATIONS

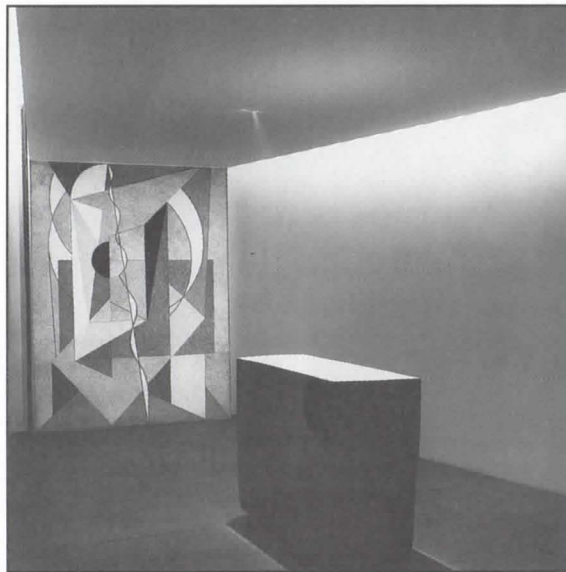
*The outer message of the United Nations is peace.
The inner message of the United Nations is love.
The inmost message of the United Nations is oneness.*

Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations is an association of U.N. delegates, staff members and non-governmental organization representatives who believe that the quest for world peace must encompass not only political, economic and social issues but also a broader, spiritual dimension. Through its meditations and other programmes for peace, the Group focusses on the spiritual values inherent in the U.N. Charter and the opportunities, through meditation and inner reflection, for all of us to better serve them.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The importance of meditation as a force for world peace has been recognized by the United Nations from its earliest days, when it was decided to open and close each session of the General Assembly with a minute of silence. The first Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, had a

The meditation room at U.N. headquarters, designed by Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold. The importance of meditation as a force for world peace has long been recognized by the U.N.



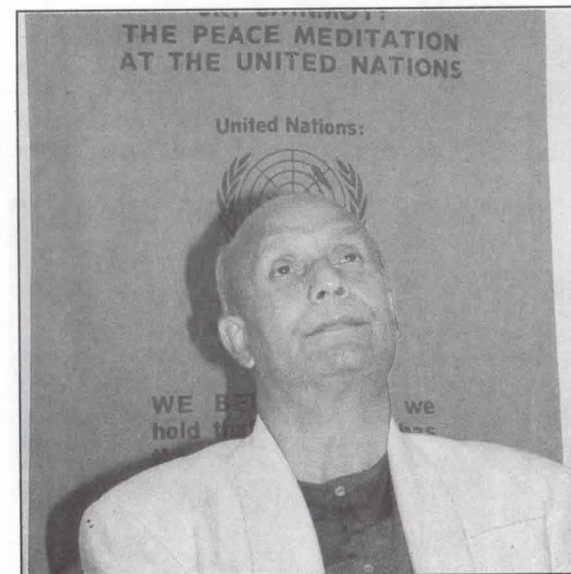
meditation room built in the Secretariat building and his successor, Dag Hammarskjold, designed the room as we know it today. It is in this tradition that the Peace Meditation has been offering regular meditations for delegates and staff at United Nations headquarters.

The Group's leader, Sri Chinmoy, is an internationally respected philosopher, lecturer, author and spiritual teacher with an inter-denominational approach to meditation. In 1970 he was invited by United Nations staff to serve as leader of a meditation group then starting up at U.N. headquarters.

Under his guidance, the Peace Meditation has dedicated itself to the highest ideals of spiritual harmony and world peace. The late Secretary-General U Thant, a lifelong practitioner of meditation, warmly praised its efforts, and his two successors, Kurt Waldheim and Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, have also expressed their support.

PEACE MEDITATIONS

For over two decades, the Peace Meditation has been holding twice-weekly lunchtime meditation sessions, led by Sri Chinmoy, consisting of periods of silent meditation interspersed with meditative music. From time to time, Sri Chinmoy also offers lectures during these meetings. In an environment conducive to deep reflection, individuals can explore within themselves ways to strengthen their own inner peace as well as their outer commitment to world peace.



Sri Chinmoy leads a peace meditation session. In an atmosphere conducive to deep reflection, members of the U.N. community can explore within themselves the source of peace, both individual and collective.

I have certain priorities in regards to virtues and human values . . . I would attach greater importance to moral qualities or moral virtues over intellectual qualities or intellectual virtues . . . And above all, I would attach the greatest importance to spiritual values, spiritual qualities.—U Thant

In his various activities, Peace Meditation leader Sri Chinmoy has met with many religious and political leaders to discuss the spiritual dimensions of the quest for world peace and to express support for U.N. principles. At right, he receives the blessings of Pope John Paul II.



Meditation Group programmes touch on a wide variety of political, cultural and spiritual topics. At right, representatives of the world's major faiths join together for an interdenominational Day of Prayer.



Above, Sri Chinmoy with United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, a lifelong practitioner of meditation. At right, he is warmly greeted by Mikhail Gorbachev during the Soviet President's visit to Canada.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Meditation Group regularly sponsors symposia in which ambassadors, U.N. officials and religious leaders express their own dreams of peace to inspire others in both their personal and professional lives.

The Group also holds commemorative programmes, concerts, films, meditation classes and athletic events.

In recent years, the Peace Meditation has sponsored programmes:

- Observing significant occasions such as U.N. Day and Human Rights Day;
- Honouring inspirational figures such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Albert Einstein and Simon Bolivar, and organizations such as the International Red Cross and WHO, for their outstanding contributions to international cooperation;



- Addressing crisis situations with "emergency prayer sessions" and other programmes;
- Highlighting the unique national identity and cultural or artistic contributions of different countries;
- Providing a forum where ambassadors, U.N. staff and guest artists can share their musical and literary talents;
- Welcoming delegates to the world body at the time of the General Assembly;
- Providing regular instruction in meditation.

PEACE WALKS

In cooperation with a number of Permanent Representatives of U.N. Member States, the Peace Meditation sponsors special "peace walks" commemorating United Nations Charter Day (26 June) and United Nations Day (24 October). During these events, nationals of different countries walk in meditative silence through the U.N. Garden, carrying a copy of the Preamble to the U.N. Charter.

In addition, early in the morning of the first day of the General Assembly, in cooperation with Permanent Representatives as well as non-governmental organizations and other groups supportive of the U.N., the Meditation Group annually sponsors a walk for peace through the streets of New York, which begins and ends at U.N. headquarters. Afterwards, ambassadors, staff members and other participants gather for an interdenominational prayer breakfast.

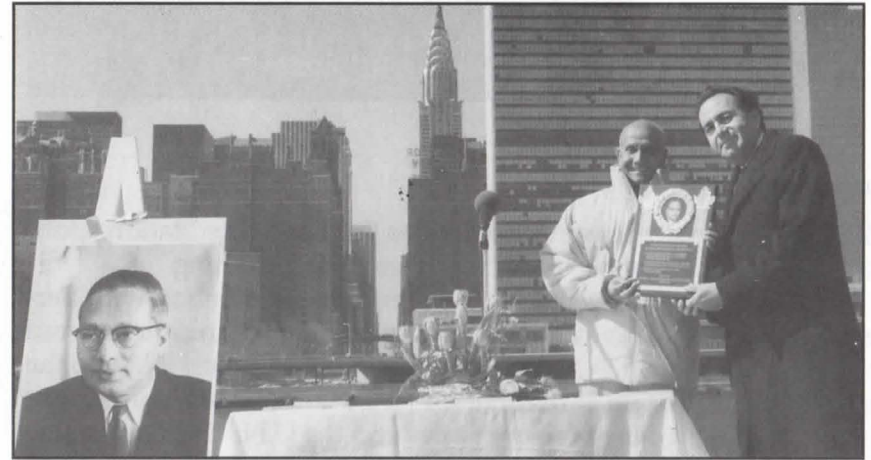
The UN Chronicle, a publication of the U.N. Department of Public Information, reported below on the Peace Walk marking the 40th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. Charter.



Participants in the "Peace Walk for United Nations Day" walked silently through the United Nations garden on 25 and 26 June to commemorate the anniversary of the adoption and signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco in 1945. Representatives of Member States passed a copy of the Charter's preamble relay-style from one country group to another. The event was organized by Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations, and co-sponsored by Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Cyprus, Malta, Mauritius, Nepal, Samoa, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

SEVEN MINUTES OF WORLD PEACE

Another event co-sponsored by the Group is "Seven Minutes of World Peace", a simultaneous global observance of peaceful silence in honour of U.N. Day. Since its inception in 1984, people from more than 40 countries have participated in this unique initiative. The programme has also won broad support from several Heads of State and Mayors of key cities around the world.



Uner Kirdar, Director of the Division of External Relations, accepting the U Thant Peace Award for the U.N. Development Programme, on U Thant Island, a small island in the East River, directly facing the U.N. The Peace Meditation arranged to have the island renamed in honour of the late Secretary-General.

SPECIAL AWARDS

For a number of years, the Peace Meditation has offered distinguished members of the international community its Human Rights Award and U Thant Peace Award for contributions to world peace carried out in the spirit of the late Secretary-General. Award winners have included General Assembly Presidents Guido de Marco of Malta, Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania and Jorge Illueca of Panama. Other recipients have included the late Ambassador Zenon Rossides of Cyprus; Lakhan Mehrotra, Secretary of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs; the United Nations Development Programme; and — for their efforts to promote religious understanding — Pir Vilayat Khan, Head of the Sufi Order in the West, and Dr. Russell Barber, religion editor at WNBC-TV.

Runners carry miniature flags en route to U.N. headquarters as part of the Peace Run for the United Nations, an annual event.



ATHLETIC EVENTS

Some of the commemorative activities the Peace Meditation sponsors are athletic events—particularly involving running.

Each year the Group holds a relay run, in cooperation with Permanent Representatives and non-governmental organizations, from the site of the former U.N. headquarters at Lake Success, N.Y., to the current headquarters in Manhattan—a distance of 18.5 miles. Runners carry flags of the Member States and the U.N. The Group also conducts one-mile peace runs in the U.N. Garden for delegates and staff, who enjoy friendly competition and international camaraderie.

Members of the U.N. community are warmly invited to participate in our twice-weekly non-denominational meditations and other programmes for peace. You are welcome to join us for all or part of a session, in a quiet atmosphere which allows each individual to pursue his or her own personal way of meditation. For those interested, members of the Group also offer classes in hatha yoga exercises, meditation techniques and spiritual philosophy.

*For more information please contact:
Sri Chinmoy: The Peace Meditation at the United Nations
P.O. Box 20, Room DN-1406
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