

By Anton Perera

THE Sri Chinmoy Odyssey in Thailand continues to traverse Thailand territory with a steady beat, winning more and more friends in the cause of the Peace Message the great spiritualist is trying to engender.

Currently in Hua Hin with some hundred of his followers and spreading his highly salutary gospel of brotherliness — 'One-ness' to use the word Sri Chinmoy himself has coined — the Indian sage has enthralled the hundreds of people he has met by his simplicity, his erudition and his saintliness, and not a few of his newly-won subjects have been stunned by his athletic performances, particularly those connected with his single-arm lifts of people in all walks of life.

Yesterday, Sri Chinmoy was pleased to meet with one of Thailand's top amateur golfers of yesteryear, the revered Phra Vinaiporn Virasak Kittivaro, better known in Hua Hin as 'Luang Por Eed,' who is the Abbot of the Temple on a Rock in the northern sector of town.

Formerly the son of one of Thailand's veterans in the Foreign Service Avudh Petchsingh, Virasak was well known as an avid golfer much after the manner of his father, and he represented Thailand in the Putra Cup. Today, he has shed his worldly mantle and has taken upon himself the austere life of a monk dedicated to humanity and the cause of lifting up the minds and hearts of his fellow human beings.

GREAT MISSION

Phra Kittivaro was happy to receive Sri Chinmoy and those with him, and no less than 15 monks were lifted by the latter with the same ease and sense of spirituality that has attended these exercises from the time he began doing so.

In fact, wherever he has gone so far on

this great mission of his, Sri Chinmoy has had nothing but the greatest receptivity towards a man of strong principles and one who is fired by the high ideal of spreading the message of peace through sport and simple, not necessarily austere living.

Very much like the top all-round athletes of our time, who shine above others through their discipline, dedication and the determination and will to win whether they do so or not, Sri Chinmoy continues to spread the same message of great physical endurance and stamina, allied to the 'mind over matter' syndrome that opens many more doors to achievement than one would be willing to admit.

Not long ago, Sri Chinmoy had this to say of his monumental one-arm lifts of top individuals in sport and other fields:

"When someone does something great, he is cheered by his colleagues. They congratulate him. Here also I am trying to congratulate them with my prayerful meditation and inner oneness with them.

"As you can see, I am not a bodybuilder. I do not have the muscle mass of a weightlifter; I do not have the strength of a weightlifter. But I am a truth-seeker and a God-lover. I pray and meditate so that I can establish my oneness-heart with each and every human being in the whole world."

And when one speaks of athletes of the calibre of Carl Lewis, Roger Kingdom and Andre Philips, Ilie Nastase and Ramesh Krishnan and innumerable others, it is reassuring on this Christmas morning to be edified by what the Indian Ambassador to Thailand, H.E. Vinay Verma had to say when Sri Chinmoy lifted him with a single arm in Bangkok before he left for the South. Said Ambassador Verma, "I was very happy to participate in the lift. It is a great honour to be in the distinguished company of so many others who have been lifted before."

Statements such the Ambassador's must surely inspire others to raise their own aspirations of peace, understanding and achievement in our time.