

The article below was carried by the Associated Press wire service on 1 November 1985 and appeared in numerous newspapers worldwide.

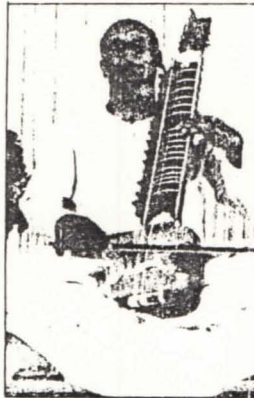
UNITED NATIONS (AP) — A small man sits cross-legged on stage, a wooden flute held up to his smooth, round face. Plaintive echoes gently fill the hall, then give way to silence.

The sounds are simple, far from the pomp that marked the United Nations' official 40th anniversary. But they drew 21 U.N. ambassadors and nearly 2,000 New Yorkers to a performance this week.

Sri Chinmoy gave the concert at Lincoln Center as a birthday present to the world organization. For more than a decade, the spiritual master has been working in a quiet way to bring peace to the turbulent halls of the United Nations.

Twice a week, close to 100 delegates and staff gather during their lunch hour in a basement conference room at U.N. headquarters to meditate with the 54-year-old philosopher.

"If the inner world is inundated with peace," Sri Chinmoy tells them, "then the nightmare of world war cannot even come into being."



Sri Chinmoy

Monday's "Peace Concert" at Lincoln Center was an extension of that effort. Sri Chinmoy took up a dozen instruments during the evening, from an Indian sitar to the harmonium.

The Peace Meditation group at the United Nations, founded in 1970, seeks to keep delegates and employees focused on the ideals of the organization: cooperation and peace.

"There may be hurricane on the top of the ocean, but it doesn't mean there is a hurricane in the depths," Susan Brummell, a spokeswoman

for the group, said in an interview. "It is only by tapping the vast wealth of inner peace that we will ever be able to smooth the troubled waters of the United Nations."

"It's not necessarily a fast process," she said.

Last week, as the world watched the organization celebrate its anniversary, politics prevented U.N. delegates from agreeing even on a declaration to mark the occasion. The United States objected to a paragraph referring to Palestinian self-determination, and Arab states refused to leave it out.

"That's the type of thing that discourages me," said Adhiratha Keefe, head of records management for the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, who is a member of the group. "If it wasn't for (the meditation sessions), I probably would have left the U.N. long ago."

Born Chinmoy Kumar Chose in Chittagong, in what is now Bangladesh, Sri Chinmoy now counts 1,100 disciples around the world. His meditation center in Queens, New York, is one of 60 worldwide.

He is a prolific writer, painter and composer and a dedicated runner and tennis player.

His philosophy, he said recently, is to accept the setbacks as temporary. "We accept society as it is and, at the same time, strive to better society — with its kind cooperation."

The U.N. secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, has applauded the group's work.

"In your meditation you see

beyond the superficial distinctions of race, sex, language or religion as the U.N. Charter encourages us to do," he told the group. "You concentrate on the truths and ideals which unite all mankind: the longing for peace, the need for compassion, the search for tolerance and understanding."

Sri Chinmoy doesn't try to meditate between disputing sides at the United Nations. His meditation is designed to give different sides a sense of their commonality.

In addition to its meditation sessions and lectures, the group touches U.N. life in other ways. The State of New York has given it, under a renewable lease, a man-made island slightly larger than a tugboat.

Once little more than a subway airshaft and a haven for rats, the island lies in the East River in view of half of the U.N. offices. The group has planted a tree and grass, and put up U.N. blue fence defining the boundary between the greenery and its rocky shore. The rats have disappeared of their own accord.

"We see it as kind of symbolic of the transformation of the U.N. and of the world," said Miss Brummell.

ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS WORLDWIDE

To share their concern for peace and the goals of the United Nations with like-minded individuals around the world, Sri Chinmoy Centres in many countries have organised special events to bring the positive achievements of the Organisation to the attention of the public, particularly on United Nations Day. In appreciation of his work in promoting the observance of U.N. Day, the United Nations Association of the United States awarded Sri Chinmoy its Distinguished Service Award in 1977 and again in 1979.

SEVEN MINUTES OF WORLD PEACE

On United Nations Day (24 October) in 1984, the Peace Meditation group inaugurated "Seven Minutes of World Peace," a simultaneous global observance of seven minutes of peaceful silence. Governments are requested to refrain from hostile action during this period. Since its inception, more than 100 groups in over 40 countries have joined the annual observance, and letters and proclamations have been received from Heads of State and mayors of more than 40 cities. Below are some comments from individuals and organisations involved.

"Seven Minutes of World Peace is an inspiring endeavour to unite the world in peace."

—Dr. Helen Caldicott, President Emeritus
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Founder, Women's Action for Nuclear Disarmament

"As a peace-loving nation, Jamaica appreciates all efforts and activities aimed at promoting world peace and recognises the importance of praying for peace. I sincerely hope that the activities you are planning will help to promote the spirit of peace across the world."

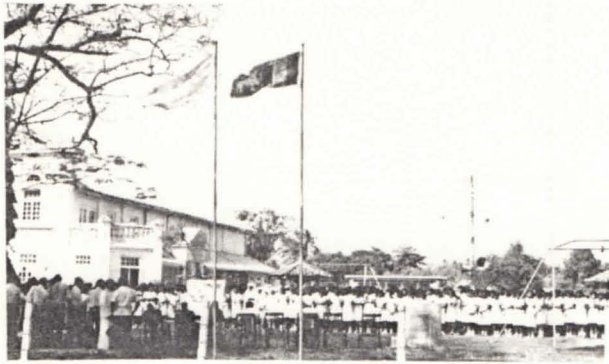
—F. A. Glasspole
Governor-General of Jamaica, West Indies

"I hope the Seven Minutes of World Peace will grow into eternal world peace."

—Masahiko Igeda, Director
Office of the Mayor, Hiroshima, Japan

"More than 1,000 schoolchildren, teachers and members of the public participated. For the first time, the state radio gave wide publicity in the Sinhala news broadcast and as a result the campaign has now received initial island-wide publicity."

—Kumaran Fernando, Secretary-General
United Nations Association of Sri Lanka



One of Sri Lanka's many gatherings for "Seven Minutes of World Peace." In 1986, the United Nations Association of Sri Lanka sent



15,000 letters to institutions (including all secondary schools) announcing the event and asking for volunteer leaders.

THE PEACE WALK (FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE)

Each year on the United Nations International Day of Peace (the opening day of the United Nations General Assembly), peace walks are organised in dozens of cities on six continents during the dawn hours, a time of day chosen for its calm, meditative qualities. Participants walk in a contemplative spirit, carrying the flags of their own nations or of the United Nations. In New York, participants walk a seven-mile route, beginning and ending at the United Nations, and afterwards are invited to join U.N. Ambassadors for a prayer breakfast.

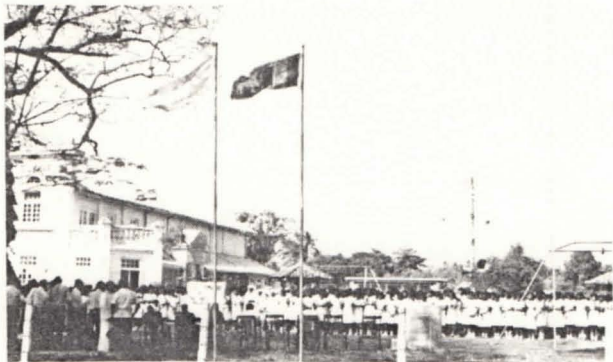
ATHLETIC EVENTS

Many of the activities in support of U.N. Day and other United Nations programmes have been athletic events, particularly involving running and cycling, often in cooperation with local United Nations Associations. Governors, mayors and other local officials have shown their support for these activities with letters to the Secretary-General, and have brought the events to the attention of the public through proclamations. A book of such proclamations and letters was presented to the Secretary-General by Sri Chinmoy during their January 1983 meeting.

Following are descriptions of the most outstanding of these athletic events.

- Annual U.N. Day 10-km run in Geneva. Begun in 1982, the race has grown to over 400 runners, with prizes given by the Director-General of the U.N. Office at Geneva.

- 320-km relay run from Canberra to Sydney, Australia, completed on U.N. Day, 1977 for the U.N.'s 32nd birthday, held in conjunction with a 1,600-km bicycle relay.
- 450-mile relay run from Edinburgh to London, United Kingdom, ending on U.N. Day, 1976
- 230-km relay run between the twin cities of Freiburg, Federal Republic of Germany, and Besancon, France, in 1980 "to symbolise unity among nations on U.N. Day."
- International bicycle relay starting at the Peace Arch on the U.S.-Canada border, in 1980. Cyclists exchanged letters of greeting from the Mayors of Seattle, Vancouver and Victoria, and state and local leaders. They then rode back to present these at their cities' respective U.N. Day ceremonies.
- Swim across the English Channel in tribute to the 40th anniversary of the U.N.
- A 3,000-mile solo run across America, starting in San Francisco and finishing at U.N. headquarters on 24 January 1986, dedicated to the International Year of Peace.
- Peace Runs for the public held worldwide on a regular basis.



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