

Sri Chinmoy conducting a meditation session at All Angels' Episcopal Church, at 251 West 80th Street.

800 Seek Inner Peace With Chinmoy in Church

By GEORGE DUGAN

More than 800 New Yorkers sought inner peace yesterday at a series of three meditation sessions conducted by Sri Chinmoy, the Indian mystic and guru, at All Angels' Episcopal church, West End Avenue and 81st Street.

Most of the meditators were students or young adults, many of whom sat with hands clasped as in prayer through the sessions that ran from 6 A.M. to 9 A.M., 10 A.M. to noon and from 2 to 4 P.M.

Clad in a blue dhoti, or robe, and sitting cross-legged on a throne-like chair covered with white satin, the guru appeared to be in a trance-like state, relieved only by the flicker of his eyes and an occasional, almost beatific smile.

All of the sessions began with about 20 minutes of unbroken silence as Sri Chinmoy faced his audience and sought to move from one level of consciousness to another.

His only words were to ask

groups of followers to join in short musical interludes that served as a devout addition to the silence.

Steve Hein, a young corporation executive and a disciple of Sri Chinmoy for seven years, emphasized that most of the guru's followers found in meditation an extension of their own, religious beliefs.

"There are Jews, Protestants and Roman Catholics here today who have found a greater appreciation of their separate faiths through meditation," he said. "It's like a direct approach to God."

The guru was born in Bengal, India, in 1931. He reportedly had a number of deep, mystical experiences and at the age of 12 achieved, in Mr. Hein's words, "a state of conscious union with God."

Sri Chinmoy came to the west in 1964 and built up his spiritual meditation movement in some 60 cities over the world.

His "disciples" — distinct from interested followers — number about 1,000 and serve without pay. Most of the movement's expenses are met through the sale of the guru's 260 books of spiritual poetry, lectures, essays, articles and plays.

Sri Chinmoy is director of the United Nations Meditation Group, conducts weekly sessions at the U.N., and has delivered a number of lectures there as part of the Dag Hammarskjöld Series.