

T. P. Sreenivasan, *Words Words Words - Adventure in Diplomacy*

say that there were two kings in Bhutan, 'Jigme' (Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, the King) and 'Jaggi' (the General). The arrival of a representative of India undermined Jaggi's status, but he continued to enjoy the confidence of the king and overshadowed the diplomatic representative. The general was an avid collector of driftwood pieces, which he turned into abstract art by highlighting their contours. He held several exhibitions of his driftwood abroad. After he left Bhutan, he was asked to design and build a National Defence Museum, and he visited us in Moscow in this connection.

Bhutan celebrated its admission to the United Nations with great gusto, as it was symbolic of its rise to full nationhood. With a treaty relationship that entrusted its foreign affairs to India, Bhutan really did not have a case to seek membership of the United Nations, but India generously agreed when Bhutan aspired to secure a certain international standing. Some said that it was like Ukraine and Byelorussia being members of the United Nations together with the USSR. But very soon Bhutan began to insist that it should have the freedom to decide on its own position, at least on issues that were not of direct concern to India. A case in point was the vote on Kampuchea at the United Nations. India abstained on a resolution that criticised foreign intervention in Kampuchea, while Bhutan voted for it. On issues of crucial importance to India, Bhutan pledged to vote with India. Bhutan always voted with India on South Asian issues and on nuclear non-proliferation. It was inevitable for Bhutan to operate independently when problems of small developing countries or landlocked countries came up. Bhutan's membership of the United Nations also opened up new avenues for bilateral and multilateral assistance for Bhutan.

A dramatic move by Bhutan in support of India took place within months of my arrival there. Das's successor, Ambassador Ashok Gokhale, had arrived in Bhutan, but he was away on consultations when India announced its recognition of a new Bangladesh government, just before the Bangladesh war broke out. Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, the Bhutanese Foreign Minister called me and told me, within hours of the government having been sworn in a mangrove, that Bhutan wished to extend recognition to the new Bangladesh government. This was seen in Delhi as a great act of solidarity and the news broke all over the world that Bhutan was the second country in the world to recognise Bangladesh. But did Bhutan have an obligation to await India's advice before taking this step? No one bothered