

OUR CHINA POLICY

WHILE AT Geneva, I noticed that the news that India and China have agreed to restore representation at Ambassador's level and normalise their relationship which suffered a severe jolt after the border incident of 1962, surprised many U.N. diplomats there. As there were no earlier indications of the imminent thaw in the relationship, many had accepted as an international fact the continued strained relationship between India and China. Naturally, there was speculation as to the implications and consequences of the move to get closer by these two giants of Asia. One line of comment was that China wanted to wean India away from the Soviet orbit and neutralise India in the raging controversy between China and the Soviet Union. The European edition of the *Herald Tribune* opined that India had asserted her independence and freedom of action without solicitude to the Soviet reactions on the move. But everyone was agreed that the move was a master-stroke of diplomacy pregnant with possibilities of peace in the region. There was all-round appreciation of the Prime Minister of India for taking the bold initiative of breaking the deadlock and re-establishing communications at the highest level. A border dispute over an area of



doubtful utility to either side involving heavy defence expenditure is neither in the interest nor to the liking of either party. The sooner the situation was remedied and normalcy restored the better for all concerned.

Within the country also, the move has raised great enthusiasm and high hopes. Questions like vacating the areas occupied in the 1962 campaign, demarcation of the boundaries and the creation of a buffer zone, if necessary, establishing trade and air links and a host of other matters of mutual interest to both countries can now be taken up at the Ambassadorial level and sorted out. Since communication helps understanding, a closer association of the two countries in matters relating to the South and South-East Asian region comes within the realm of possibility. At the same time, one should guard oneself against rais-

ing high hopes of immediate solutions or a change in attitudes. Note should be taken of factors like the Chinese friendship with Pakistan and hostility towards the Soviet Union in contrast to our relations with those countries.

Chinese criticism of India in the international forum has been severe in the recent past and may not tone down abruptly. It, therefore, calls for patience and understanding on both sides to work out a lasting friendly relationship. There is, however, one area in which India may be enabled to play a valuable role comparable to the part she played during the cold war. It is an ancient dictum in international relations that there are no permanent friends nor enemies. The differences between the Soviet Union and China may fall under the above rule and possibilities of reconciliation cannot be ruled out. The power struggle that followed the demise of Chou-en-Lai presages possibilities of a similar struggle after Mao. In any such situation, a friendly China-Soviet relationship may prove to be a great asset and help stability in China. Should the far-sighted Chinese statesmen endeavour to keep those options open, they may find in India a friendly intermediary who could help in bringing about a detente and re-establishing Sino-Soviet relationship.

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sculptor has created a tableau in stone of burning passion. Deep down in the heart of man lies this possessive instinct which is the joy and plague of humanity through the ages!

SENSE OF REALISM

The second study is of a beautiful woman carrying away a whiskered youth — obviously a prince. I am inclined to the suggestion that the artist is here depicting the converse position. Physical infatuation is not necessarily a male weakness and when critics have strained themselves to read a connected story in this cluster of figures I marvel at their myopia which has deprived them of distant enchantment. I am unable to subscribe to the general belief that the study is of a Korathi lifting a child while the distracted mother of the infant is consulting a palmist (another group of figures) as to her chances of recovering her truant off-spring! I do not think such a story can be read into the carvings as though it were all written down!

The sense of realism is even more discernible in the several other figure studies grouped on the

sides of the six pillars in front of the *rangamantapam*. The palmist reading the hand of a woman, with her right hand characteristically pointed at the woman's forehead, indicating the misery of her fate, is a faithful portraiture of a familiar occurrence. I do not believe that there is any other in South India to compare with this delightful study in the lightness and touching reality of the theme or even the poise of the figures! In one pillar a Koravan is shown with a monkey on his arm and a parrot on his left hand. At the base of yet another pillar we see a snake-charmer and his cobra with its hood up! These vagrants come down to our doors to entertain our children and the sculptor must have had a keen sense of enjoyment in the little pleasures of life. His studies of sub-humans are marvels of observation!

The horsemen chasing the Koravan who stole the princess are as arresting as the horses. One feels them snorting flames of anger and their glistening bodies held in tension betray a power more Himalayan in its restraint than the Konarak horse. In their perfection of form these horses appear more royal than the riders and certainly are of higher pedigree than the Konarak breed. The sculptor was obviously