

CHAPTER THIRTEEN THE COUNCIL



Brutan at dusk. As the MoChu River flows in the distance, a light rain falling, a white bellied heron and black necked crane circle overhead. Rhododendrons and blue poppies blanket the landscape. A rabbit, takin, white crow, cat, ant, carp and porcupine wait quietly. Seven Himalayan gypsy mushrooms (varying sizes) have formed a circle. Behind each mushroom a huge translucent mother of pearl oyster shell is fixed (by lichens) to a vertical tree branch placed in the ground. The animals approach, cautiously, each choosing a mushroom seat appropriate to their size, surprised to find that the seats swivel. Turning to speak to one another, they will face their own reflection. A blue poppy approaches the circle.

MECONOPSIS BETANICIFOLIA

“I am BLUEPOPPY.

Welcome to Bhutan. The following was said by our human representative at an organization called the United Nations.

“Man is just a sentient being, among other forms of existence. The assumption that man is on top of the chain of beings is misplaced, considering the mysterious web of interdependent relationships that is now being confirmed through scientific studies. Reality is not hierarchical but a whole, circular, enclosed system. Sustainable development is, therefore, in the interest of every being, every day, not just in the interest of future generations.”

GAZELLE

“I am KUBLER-ROSS.

We’re here to decide a plan of action. To attempt to help the human species understand they can change their thinking and attitudes carries risks. We see the world very differently.”

BLACK NECKED CRANE

“I am PEMA.

Humans believe they are superior. The change we’re suggesting will be difficult for them even to consider.”

WHITE BELLIED HERON

“I am DORJI.

It will require a new way of thinking and behaving. It won’t happen quickly.”

PORCUPINE.

“I am KAZANTZAKIS.

What’s the best way to get their attention?”

ANT

“I am HARRIET.

Insects are three fourths of all living things in this world. We outnumber humans. If we withdraw our normal behavior, we’d disrupt many lives.”

RABBIT

“I am BETTELHEIM.

In every territory, every language, humans write stories for their young. In these stories, there’s one rule. If an animal gives you advice and you don’t follow it, you’re in trouble. I think we might consider enlisting the help of their young. Because of the stories they’ve grown up with, they might be more open to listen to us.”

CARP

“I am WHEREIBELONG

An excellent idea! Does everyone agree?”

BLUE POPPY

“We’ll continue tomorrow at first light.”

DAWN. Hundreds of barking dogs run everywhere. As the Council arrives, the dogs walk away, slowly and quietly.

TAKIN

“I am BENTO.

Five children have been chosen. A world wide sports competition begins next week in the territory called Australia. The children will all be there.”

WHITE CROW

“I am McCAY.

We could send them the same dream. When we first approach them, they won’t be afraid.”

PORCUPINE (KAZANTZAKIS)

“Because they’ve never seen a white one, humans think all crows are black. A dream of a white crow, calling each child by name, saying “Wait for a pat on the cheek.”

RABBIT (BETTELHEIM)

“The young are trusting. Getting the attention of adults will be more difficult.”

WHITE CROW (McCAY)

“One wakes up more quickly from a nightmare than from an ordinary dream.”

CARP (WHEREIBELONG)

“The sports event continues for two weeks. Once we see the territory and meet the children, there’s plenty of time to put a plan in place.”

