

Litir do Luchd-Ionnsachaidh le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, written and compiled by Roddy Maclean, and specifically aimed at Gaelic learners who already have some knowledge of the language. A short vocabulary and comments on points of grammar and figures of speech are included with the text. If you have comments, Roddy can be contacted by e-mail at rodny.macleam@bbc.co.uk **

Ann an litir o chionn mìos bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu bhoireannach à Astràilia is aithne dhomh a thug sgàilean, neo sgail-uisge, leatha don Eilean Sgitheanach. Cha do mhair e slàn ach dà latha mus deach a bhriseadh ann an stoirm. Agus bheirinn comhairle do dhuine sam bith a tha a’ tighinn don Ghàidhealtachd bho dhùthaich eile gun a bhith a’ toirt sgàilean leis. Còta gu cinnteach, ach chan eil sgàilean gu mòran feum nuair a tha a’ ghaoth làidir mar a bhios i gu tric air Ghàidhealtachd.

Ach tha sgàileanan gu mòran feum ann an dùthchannan eile far am bi tòrr uisge ann ach far nach bi cus gaoith’ ann aig an aon àm. Ann an ceann a deas is taobh sear Àisia, mar eisimpleir, bidh mòran gan cleachdadh gu h-àraidh anns an ràith fhliuch, neo *monsoon* mar a chanas iad. Chithear manaich Bhudastach ann an Thailand ann an earradh cròch neo orains, a’ coiseachd na sràid, is chan eil càil aca nan làmhan ach sgàilean snasail dubh.

Agus anns na beanntan gu tuath air na h-Innseachan, far a bheil daoine, anns an fharsaingeachd, gu math bochd, ’s ann tric a chithear bodach a’ coiseachd tro bhealach àrd, eadar craobhan *rhododendron*, gun bhrògan air a chasan is le glè bheag a dh’aodach air. Ach bidh e a’ toirt sgàilean leis fo achlais mar a bhios muinntir nan oifisean mòra ann an Lunnainn gach madainn is feasgar.

Mar a shaoileadh sibh, ’s ann airson an cumail fhèin tioram a tha a’ mhòrchuid a’ giùlain sgàilean leotha. Ach gu deas air na beanntan anns na sgìrean teth is fliuch gu h-àraidh ann an taobh sear nan Innseachan faisg air Bàgh Bheangàil, tha adhbhar a bharrachd ann. Cha do smaoinich mi air a seo gus an cuala mi còmhradh air an rèidio turas le boireannach à baile faisg air Calcutta.

Bha am fear-naidheachd a bha a’ deanamh an agallaimh air mothachadh do rud annasach fhad ’s a bha e anns an sgìre sin. Bhiodh mòran de mhuinntir an àite a’ coiseachd timcheall le sgàileanan. Agus bhiodh na sgàileanan suas fosgailte, os an cionn. Ach ’s e an rud a chuir iongnadh air – nach robh an t-uisge ann aig an àm! Bha e tioram ach, a dh’aindeoin sin, bha na sgàileanan suas.

“Carson a tha sin?” dh’fhaighnich e dheth fhèin, agus ’s e sin a’ cheist a chuir e air a’ bhoireannach air an rèidio.

“Uill, nach eil e follaiseach?” fhreagair am boireannach, “tha airson ar dìon.”
“Ach cha robh an t-uisge ann,” thuirt am fear eile, “neo a’ ghrian na bu mhotha.” (leis gu robh e sgòthach)
“O,” ars’ am boireannach, “chan e uisge neo grian a tha a’ cur dragh oirnn.”
“Uill,” thuirt am fear-naidheachd, “dè tha a’ cur dragh oirbh ma thà?”
“Tha,” ars’ ise, “nathraichean.”

Aig an àm seo dhen bhliadhna, tha e coltach, bidh na nathraichean puinnseanta, ris an canar *cobras*, a’ leum a-mach às na craobhan air daoine a tha a’ coiseachd fodhpa. Ach ma tha sgàilean os do chionn, chan fhaigh an nathair a fiaclan annad agus tha deagh chothrom agad faighinn air falbh. Ma ’s breug bhuan e, is breug thugam e!

O chionn greis gheall mi dhuibh gun toirinn tòimhseachan dhuibh bho àm gu àm. Agus airson crìoch a chur air an litir an t-seachdain-sa, ged nach eil ceangal aige do nathraichean neo sgàileanan, seo fear eile.

*Is mi mi-fhìn,
Is mi gach duine
Ach sgrìob mo dhruim
's cha mhi duin' idir.*

Seo e a-rithist:

*Is mi mi-fhìn,
Is mi gach duine
Ach sgrìob mo dhruim
's cha mhi duin' idir.*

Uill, faodaidh sibh smaoinichadh air agus innsibh mi dhuibh de th’ann an ath sheachdainn.

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Faclan na seachdaine: sgàilean, sgail-uisge: *umbrella*; mar eisimpleir: *for example*; ràith: *season*; snasail: *neat, elegant*; bealach: *mountain pass*; fo achlais: *under his arm*; Bàgh Bheangàil: *the Bay of Bengal*; adhbhar: *reason*; iongnadh: *surprise*; follaiseach: *obvious*; nathair, nathraichean: *snake, snakes*; puinnseanta (or puinnseanach): *poisonous*; fodhpa: *below them*; a fiaclan: *her teeth* (nathair is feminine).

Abairtean na seachdaine: o chionn mìos: *a month ago*; boireannach ... is aithne dhomh: *a woman I know*; cha do mhair e slàn ach dà latha: *it only remained intact for two days*; gun a bhith a’ toirt sgàilean leis: *not to bring an umbrella with him*; gu mòran feum: *of much use*; bidh mòran gan cleachdadh: *many (people) use them*; chìthear manaich Bhudastach ... ann an earradh cròch neo orains: *Buddhist monks are seen in saffron or orange robes*; gu tuath air na

h-Innseachan: *to the north of India*; gu deas air na beanntan: *to the south of the mountains*; gus an cuala mi: *until I heard*; bha am fear-naidheachd a bha a' deanamah an agallaimh air mothachadh do rud annasach: *the journalist who was doing the interview had noticed something unusual*; a' coiseachd timcheall: *walking around*; a dh'aindeoin sin: *despite that*; airson ar dìon: *to protect us*; neo a' ghrian na bu mhotha: *or the sun either*; tha deagh chothrom agad faighinn air falbh: *you have a good opportunity to get away*; gheall mi dhuibh gun toirinn tòimhseachan dhuibh: *I promised I would give you a riddle*; airson crìoch a chur air: *to finish*.

Puing ghràmair na seachdaine: Is mi mi-fhìn, is mi gach duine, ach sgrìob mo dhruim 's cha mhi duin' idir. *Literally this means "I am myself, I am each person, but scratch my back and I'm nobody."* The negative form of the Assertive Verb – cha mhi (*I am not, the opposite to "is mi"*) is sometimes confused by learners with the future of the Verb to Be (cha bhi). It is most often used in response to the question "an tu?" or in the emphatic form "an tusa" (*are you?*). Gabh mo lethsgèul, an tusa Iain Mac a' Ghobhainn? (*excuse me are you John Smith?*). Cha mhi, is mis' a bhrathair, Alasdair (*no, I am his brother, Alasdair*). A Dhòmhnail, an tusa a bhios a' deanamh na lite an-diugh? (*Donald, is it yourself that is making the porridge today?*). Cha mhi, chan eil mi math air (*no I am no good at it*).

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Ma 's breug bhuam e, is breug thugam e: *lit. if it is a lie from me, it is a lie to me ie. I am only relating what I have heard and cannot affirm its veracity! This is a commonly used expression in Gaelic, and sometimes in conversation only the first part is used (ma 's breug bhuam e...), the rest being understood.*

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