

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 * This is Litir 252.*

Bidh èiteagan, no clachan beaga geala, a’ nochdadh gu tric ann an co-cheangal ri geasan ann am beul-aithris na Gaidhealtachd. Tha mi cinnteach gun cuala sibh, mar eisimpleir, an naidheachd ainmeil mun chloich ghil a chleachd Calum Cille nuair a bha e ann an Inbhir Nis airson tadhal air Brùd, Rìgh nan Cruithneach. Bha an t-àrd-dhraoidh aig Brùd, fear Broichean, a’ cumail nighean Ghaidhealach am bruid, ach bha e cuideachd a’ fulaing droch shlàinte. Dh’aontaich Calum Cille cobhair a dhèanamh air nan leigeadh e an nighean ma sgaoil.

B’ e an leigheas dha – an èiteag aig Calum Cille a chur ann an uisge, agus an t-uisge òl. Nuair a dh’aontaich Broichean an nighean a leigeil ma sgaoil, thug Calum Cille a’ chlach dha. Gu h-iongantach, cha d’ rachadh i fodha anns an uisge. Dh’ fhan i air uachdar. Agus dh’obraich an leigheas, oir nuair a dh’òl Broichean an t-uisge, chaidh e am feabhas sa mhionaid.

Ged a bha Calum Cille a’ ceangal a’ ghnòthaich ri Dia nan Crìosdaidhean, bha e a’ leantainn air gnàths pàganach, agus feumaidh gun do choisinn e spèis am measg nan Cruithneach pàganach don chreideamh aige fhèin anns an dòigh sin. Agus, ged a ghabh an creideamh ùr greim làidir air muinntir na h-Alba, lean na seann dòighean anns a’ choimhearsnachd gu ìre air choreigin thairis air na linntean bhon uair sin.

Bha mi a’ leughadh an là eile mu thachartas ann am Baile Dhubhthaich, ann an taobh sear Rois, mu mheadhan an naoidheamh linn deug. Bha fear-siubhail ann am Baile Dhubhthaich nuair a dh’fhàs e tinn. Cha mhòr nach do dh’fhanntaich e. Ghabh bean an taighe, far an robh e a’ fuireach, dragh mòr mu dheidhinn, agus dh’fhalbh i a dh’iarraidh cobhair bho a nàbaidhean. Nuair a thàinig na boireannaich sin cruinn còmhla ann an làthaireachd an duine, thuirt iad “Ghabh sùil air”. Bha iad a’ ciallachadh an *droch-shùil*. ’S e sin nuair a tha comas aig cuideigin neach eile a chur fo gheasaibh le bhith a’ coimhead air. An droch-shùil. Bhathar a’ creidsinn sin, no ’s dòcha thathar a’ creidsinn sin, ann am mòran dùthchannan, an fheadhainn Cheilteach nam measg.

Co-dhiù, chuir na boireannaich an duine seo leth-rùisgte air bòrd. An uair sin lion iad peile fiodha le uisge. Agus chuir iad trì buinn airgid anns an uisge – leth-chrùn, tastan agus crotag, ’s e sin bonn luach sia sgillinn. Chuir iad an t-uisge anns a’ pheile mun cuairt agus, fhad ’s a bha iad a’ dèanamh sin, dh’aithris iad ortha slànachaidh nach do thuig an duine tinn idir. An uair sin ghlan na boireannaich an t-euslainteach leis an uisge.

Gu ruige seo, cha tug mi iomradh air èiteag. B’ e sin an rud mu dheireadh a bh’ ann mar phairt dhen leigheas annasach seo. Às dèidh dhaibh an duine a ghlanadh leis an uisge, a bha a-nise coisrigte ann am beachd nam ban, thug iad a-mach clach chruinn. Agus leig tè de na boireannaich a’ chlach don uisge. Gu h-annasach chualas siosarnaich bhon pheile, agus bhris a’ chlach ann am pìosan. Gu h-obann, thàinig feabhas air an fhear thinn. Ann am priobadh na sùla – ma dh’fhaodas mi sin a ràdh (chan e droch-shùil a bhiodh ann co-dhiù) – bha e na b’ fheàrr.

Bha an duine dhen bheachd gur e a bh' anns a' chloich ach pìos de dh'aol-beò agus gur dòcha nach robh dad ceàrr air ach droch stamag. Bha e dhen bheachd gur e gun do chuir an gnothach an t-eagal air a thug a dheagh shlàinte air ais dha cho luath!

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Faclan na seachdaine: èiteag: *white pebble*; Rìgh nan Cruithneach: *King of the Picts*; àrd-dhraoidh: *chief druid*; pàganach: *pagan*; Baile Dhubhthaich: *Tain*; an droch shùil: *the evil eye*; leth-rùisgte: *half-naked*; ortha-slànachaidh: *healing incantation*; euslainteach: *patient*; siosarnaich: *hissing*; gu h-obann: *suddenly*; aol-beò: *quicklime*; droch stamag: *a bad stomach*.

Abairtean na seachdaine: an naidheachd ainmeil mun chloich ghil: *the famous wee story about the white stone*; b' e an leigheas dha...: *his cure was...*; cha d' rachadh i fodha: *it [fem.] wouldn't go under*; chaidh e am feabhas sa mhionaid: *his condition immediately improved*; feumaidh gun do choisinn e spèis: *he must have won respect*; lean na seann dòighean: *the old ways continued*; gu ìre air choreigin: *to some degree*; cha mhòr nach do dh'fhanntaich e: *he almost fainted*; dh'fhalbh i a dh'iarraidh cobhair: *she went to get help*; ghabh sùil air: *he has suffered the evil eye*; lion iad peile-fiodha: *they filled a wooden pail*; leth-chrùn, tastan agus crotag: *a half-crown, a shilling and a sixpence*; chuir iad an t-uisge mun cuairt: *they stirred the water*; cha tug mi iomradh air: *I haven't mentioned*; a bha coisrigte ann am beachd nam ban: *which was sacred, in the women's opinion*; leig tè de na boireannaich a' chlach don uisge: *one of the women dropped the stone into the water*; ann am priobadh na sùla: *in the twinkling of an eye*; a thug a dheagh shlàinte air ais dha: *which gave him back his good health..*

Puing-ghràmail na seachdaine: nuair a tha comas aig cuideigin neach eile a chur fo gheasaibh le bhith a' coimhead air: *when somebody has the ability to put another person under a spell by looking at him. You might have wondered what fo gheasaibh meant, particularly as the noun is in a case which has virtually disappeared from modern Gaelic. Geasaibh is the old dative plural form of geas, a charm, enchantment or spell. It is here in the dative because it follows the simple preposition fo (which also causes its lenition). Dative plural forms (ending in -ibh) were universal at one time, but they have been replaced by the equivalent form to the nominative plural (making it easier for learners!) Thus we should now say fo gheasan as I said ri geasan. There would be nothing wrong with this but in some instances an archaic form of a noun is preserved in a particular phrase and this is a good example (think of "holier than thou" instead of "holier than you" and you will see that archaic forms are also preserved in English phrases).*

Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine: Dh'aontaich Calum Cille cobhair a dhèanamh air nan leigeadh e an nighean ma sgaoil: *Saint Columba agreed to help him if he (would) let the girl go free. Leig X Y ma sgaoil: X released Y.*

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