

# 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.macleon@bbc.co.uk](mailto:rodny.macleon@bbc.co.uk) \* This is Litir 287.*

An t-seachdain sa chaidh bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun leabhar aig Mairead Fay Sheathach nach maireann, *Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist*. Chaochail Mairead o chionn ghoirid agus bu mhath leam, mar chomharra air a beatha is air a bàs, geàrr-chunntas de dh’aon stòiridh às an leabhar aice innse dhuibh. Tha mi an dòchas, mura h-eil an leabhar agaibh, gum faigh sibh lethbhreac dheth ma ghabhas sin dèanamh.

Bha uaireigin uachdaran ann a bha gu math cumhachdach. Bha an oighreachd aige cho mòr ’s gun robh grunn pharaistean innte – agus grunn sagart. Bha an t-uachdaran dhen bheachd gu robh na sagartan gun fheum. Bha e airson an cur gu bàs. Ach an toiseach bha e a’ dol a chur trì ceistean air fear aca, Maighstir Iain. Nan robh esan comasach air na ceistean a fhreagairt, bhiodh an t-uachdaran deònach leigeil leis na sagartan gu lèir fuireach beò.

Bha bràthair aig Maighstir Iain a bha na amadan. Mhothaich an t-amadan gu robh a bhràthair dòlasach agus dh’fhaighnich e carson. Dh’innis an sagart dha gu robh e an dùil bàs fhaighinn leis nach biodh e comasach air na trì ceistean a fhreagairt. “Uill,” ars’ an t-amadan, “le aodach sagairt orm tha sinn gu math coltach ri chèile. Nan rachainn ann nad àite, ’s e call na bu lugha a bhiodh ann nam faighinn fhìn bàs seach thusa.”

Dhiùlt Maighstir Iain leigeil le bhràthair sin a dhèanamh ach tràth sa mhadainn dh’fhalbh an t-amadan gu ruige taigh mòr an uachdarain le aodach an t-sagairt air. “Thàinig thu tràth a Mhaighstir Iain,” thuirt an t-uachdaran ris, agus e a’ smaoinichadh gur e an sagart a bh’ ann. “Cuiridh mi na ceistean ort mus gabh mi mo bhracaist.”

“Chan eil e gu diofar dhomh cuin’ a chuireas tu orm iad,” fhreagair an t-amadan.

“’S e a’ chiad cheist,” thuirt an t-uachdaran, “cà’ bheil teis-meadhan na cruinne?” Bha bata aig an amadan agus chuir e ann an meadhan an t-seòmair e. “Sin teis-meadhan na cruinne,” thuirt e. “Dearbh sin dhomh,” ars’ an t-uachdaran. “Uill,” thuirt an t-amadan, dèan tomhas air an astar eadar crìoch an iar na cruinne agus am bata, agus eadar a’ chrìoch an ear agus am bata, agus bho na crìochan aig tuath is aig deas, is mura h-eil am bata seo an teis-meadhan na cruinne, bhithinn deònach èisteachd ri beachd eile...”

“Seadh,” thuirt an t-uachdaran, “chan urrainn dhomh dhol an aghaidh sin, ceart gu leòr. Seo, ma-tha, an dàrna ceist – dè an luach a th’ air mo bheatha?” “Innsidh mi sin dhut,” fhreagair an t-amadan. “’S e luach do bheatha fichead ’s a naoi pìosan airgid.”

“Dè tha thu a’ ciallachadh,” ars’ an t-uachdaran, “nuair a gheibh mi barrachd na sin mar airgead-pòcaid gach là?”

“Chan eil sin gu diofar,” thuirt an t-amadan, “ach chaidh ar Slànaighear a bhrathadh airson trithead pìos airgid agus bha luach co-dhiù aona phìos airgid a bharrachd airsan na tha ortsa.”

“Uill, tha sin ceart,” thuirt an t-uachdaran. Fhuair thu fuasgladh do dhà cheist. Ach seo an treas ceist dhut, agus ’s i an tè as dorra. Innis dhomh dè tha mi a’smaoineachadh an-dràsta.”

“O, sin an tè as fhasa,” fhreagair an t-amadan. “Tha thu a’ smaoinneachadh gur e Maighstir Iain a tha a’ bruidhinn riut ach chan e – ’s e a bhràthair, an t-amadan!”

“Uill,” fhreagair an t-uachdaran, “is mise an t-amadan seach thusa. Iarr air Maighstir Iain thighinn a chèilidh orm.” Agus sin mar a thachair e. Agus tha mi an dùil gur e deagh naidheachd a chuala Maighstir Iain bhon uachdaran.

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**Faclan na seachdaine:** uachdaran: *landlord, laird*; sagart: *priest*; amadan: *fool*; oighreachd: *estate*; Maighstir Iain: *Father John*; comasach: *capable*; tràth: *early*; bata: *stick*; fuasgladh: *solution*.

**Abairtean na seachdaine:** mar chomharra air a beatha is air a bàs: *as a mark of her life and of her death*; bu mhath leam geàrr-chunntas de dh’aon stòiridh innse dhuibh: *I would like to tell you a shortened version of one story*; ma ghabhas sin dèanamh: *if that can be done*; gu robh grunn pharaistean innte: *that it [fem] contained several parishes*; gu robh na sagartan gun fheum: *that the priests were useless*; gu robh a bhràthair dòlasach: *that his brother was grim and sad*; gu robh e an dùil bàs fhaighinn: *that he expected to die*; le aodach sagairt orm tha sinn gu math coltach ri chèile: *when I put a priest’s attire on we look very like each other*; nan rachainn ann nad àite: *if I were to go in your place*; ’s e call na bu lugha a bhiodh ann: *it would be a lesser loss*; nam faighinn fhìn bàs seach thusa: *if I were to die instead of you*; mus gabh mi mo bhraic: *before I take my breakfast*; chan eil e gu diofar dhomh: *it makes no difference to me*; cà’ bheil teis-meadhan na cruinne?: *where is the exact centre of the Earth?*; dearbh sin dhomh: *prove that to me*; dèan tomhas air an astar eadar crìoch an iar na cruinne agus am bata: *measure the distance from the western edge of the world to the stick*; dè an luach a th’ air mo bheatha?: *what is my life worth?*; chaidh ar Slànaighear a bhrathadh: *our Saviour was betrayed*; bha luach co-dhiù aona phìos airgid a bharrachd airsan na tha ortsa: *he was worth at least one more piece of silver than you are worth*; ’s i an tè as dorra: *that is the most difficult one [fem]*; sin an tè as fhasa: *that’s the easiest one*.

**Puing-chànain na seachdaine:** Bha e airson an cur gu bàs: *he wanted to kill them [put them to death]*. You will note the presence here of a possessive article – an, the third person plural possessive meaning “their”. This is the normal situation for a construction of this nature. For example for “he wanted to put me to death”, we would say “bha e ag iarraidh mo chur gu bàs” or “bha e airson mo chur gu bàs”, using the first person singular possessive. For “she wanted to send them home” we might say “bha i airson an cur dhachaigh”; for “she wanted to send us home” we might say “bha i airson ar cur dhachaigh”, and so on.

**Gnàths-cainnt na seachdaine:** chan urrainn dhomh dhol an aghaidh sin: *I can't contradict that, go against that.*

\* Tha “*Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh*” air a maoinachadh le Seirbheis nam Meadhanan Gàidhlig