

Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh

le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

Dùthchas

*A special programme, in the form of a “letter”, designed for 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, Ruairidh can be contacted at roddy.maclean@bbc.co.uk. This is Litir 696. Note that there is also a simplified version called *An Litir Bheag* which is likewise available on the BBC website. Litir Bheag 392 corresponds to Litir 696.*

Bu toigh leam sùil a thoirt air an fhacal *dùthchas*. Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mu leabhar beag ùr mu dhà eilean Ghàidhealach – Árainn Mhór ann an Èirinn agus Barraigh ann an Alba. Tha an leabhar trì-chànanach. ’S e a thotal ann an Gàidhlig *Dùthchas na Mara*; ann an Gaeilge *Dúchas na Mara*. Tha am facal, agus an dòigh-smaoineachaidh co-cheangailte ris, beò fhathast anns an dà Ghàidhlig.

Ach dè a’ Bheurla a chuireadh sibh air *Dùthchas na Mara*? Chan eil facal Beurla coltach ri *dùthchas*, a bheil? Uill, ’s e an tiotal Beurla a thagh na h-ùghdaran *Belonging to the Sea*.

Seo na sgrìobh na h-ùghdaran, Iain MacFhionghain agus Ruth Ní Bhraonáin, (air a chur gu Gàidhlig le Rody Gorman): ‘Tha an rannsachadh againn a’ cur an cèill gu bheil aig cridhe [beachdan is giùlan nan eileanach] dòigh-labhairt a tha gu sònraichte Gàidhealach mu fhaireachdainn a tha an comas mhic-an-duine air feadh na cruinne-cè: an fhaireachdainn a thaobh a bhith a’ buntainn ri àite, agus an t-uallach a th’ ort airson an àite sin. A thaobh na Gàidhlig dheth, tha an fhaireachdainn seo – air an do ghabh an sgoilear mòr Gàidhlig Iain MacAonghuis seòrsa de ‘lùth-mothachaidh’ – air a glacadh leis an fhacal nach gabh tionndadh gu furasta, “dùthchas”.’

Tha MacFhionghain agus Ní Bhraonáin a’ mìneachadh, ged gur ann on fhacal Ghàidhlig *dùth* a tha *dùthchas* a’ tighinn, agus gu bheil *dùth* a’ ciallachadh ‘talamh’ no ‘fearann’, gu bheil an fhaireachdainn aig muinntir nan cladaichean, agus an t-uallach an lùib an fhacail, a’ buntainn a cheart cho math ris a’ mhuir ’s a tha e ris an tìr.

Airson *dùthchas* a mhìneachadh, tha iad a’ tilleadh gu Iain MacAonghuis: ‘S e na th’ ann an dùthchas raon-tuigse làn anns a bheil ‘barrachd na uachdar na dùthcha no cruinn-eòlas leotha fhèin, no faireachdainn dìreach mun eachdraidh, ach rian-fiosrachaidh foirmeil san tig iad seo uile còmhla. Faodaidh an rud air a bheil an coltas ann an sùilean a’ choigrich a bhith na fhàsach falamh – eireachdail no gun bhrìgh a rèir nam beachdan a tha an uachdar – a bhith na fhearann beothail, ’s dòcha fiù ’s gaisgeil is a’ cur thairis le pearsaichean eachdraidheil – don luchd-dùthchais.’

Tha sin cho fìor ’s a ghabhas, nach eil? Bidh mi a’ dèanamh tòrr bhùthan-obrach le muinntir na Beurla. Chan eil càirdeas aig a’ chuid mhòir dhiubh don tìr mar luchd-dùthchais. Ach nuair a chluinneas iad mu dhùthchas nan Gàidheal, tha farmad orra. Tha iad ag iarraidh a bhith dlùth ris an tìr san dòigh sin. Agus ’s e an rud duilich anns an latha sa bheil sinn beò, nach eil dùthchas nan Gàidheal fhèin cho làidir ’s a b’ àbhaist. A thaobh **ar fèin-aithne mar shluagh**, chanainn gu bheil e riatanach gu bheil sinn moiteil asainn fhèin mar dhaoine le dùthchas, a tha dùthchasach do dh’Alba.

Às dèidh a bhith ag obair le muinntir Árainn Mhór agus Bharraigh, dà choimhearsnachd a tha a’ strì an aghaidh bhuidhnean nàiseanta a tha a’ feuchainn ri iasgach a theannachadh sna h-uisgeachan aca, tha MacFhionghain agus Ní Bhraonáin ag ràdh gu bheil diofar sheallaidhean dhen t-saoghal aig bunait na strì. Tha iad ag ràdh, nam biomaid a’ toirt spèis a bharrachd don

eòlas thraidiseanta aig na h-eileanaich air na h-uisgeachan aca fhèin gum biomaid uile na b' fheàrr dheth. Abair e.

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Faclan na Litreach: Árainn Mhór: *Aranmore*; Iain MacAonghuis: *John MacInnes*; lùth-mothachaidh: *emotional energy*.

Abairtean na Litreach: an dòigh-smaoineachaidh: *the way of thinking*; tha an rannsachadh againn a' cur an cèill : *our research suggests*; gu bheil aig cridhe [beachdan is giùlan nan eileanach] dòigh-labhairt: *that at the heart [of the beliefs and conduct of the islanders] is an expression*; a tha an comas mhic-an-duine air feadh na cruinne-cè: *that is universally potential in human beings*; a bhith a' buntainn ri àite: *of belonging to a home place*; nach gabh tionndadh gu furasta: *that cannot be easily translated*; muinntir nan cladaichean: *maritime folk*; an t-uallach an lùib an fhacail: *the responsibility implicit in the word*; barrachd na uachdar na dùthcha no cruinne-eòlas leotha fhèin: *not so much a landscape nor a sense of geography alone*; rian-fiosrachaidh foirmeil san tig iad seo uile còmhla: *a formal order of experience in which these are all merged*; sùilean a' choigrich: *the view [eyes] of a stranger*; eireachdail no gun bhrìgh a rèir nam beachdan a tha an uachdar: *magnificent or drab according to prevailing notions*; a' cur thairis le pearsaichean eachdraidheil: *overflowing with historic figures*; tha farmad orra: *they are envious*; dlùth ris an tìr: *close to the land*; moiteil asainn fhèin mar dhaoine le dùthchas, a tha dùthchasach do dh'Alba: *proud of ourselves as people with dùthchas, who belong to Scotland*; aig bunait na strì: *at the basis of the struggle*; gum biomaid uile na b' fheàrr dheth: *that we would all be better off*.

Puing-chànain na Litreach: *The subject of this week's Litir is the word dùthchas which might be translated as 'belonging' but is more powerful than that. The dictionaries give 'heredity, instinct, nationality, birthplace, native spirit or blood, hereditary right'. The native fishermen of Barra, for example, have a dùthchas which is special; they have it at that intensity for nowhere else and no other group has it at that intensity for the waters of Barra. The Gaelic scholar Dr John MacInnes, from a terrestrial perspective, writes about a holistic understanding which encompasses 'not so much a landscape, not a sense of geography alone, nor of history alone, but a formal order of experience in which all these are merged. What is to a stranger an expanse of empty countryside – magnificent or drab according to prevailing notions – to the native sensibility can be dynamic, perhaps even heroic, territory peopled with figures from history and legend'. Are the Gaels 'indigenous' to Scotland? If we accept 'indigenous' as a translation of dùthchasach, absolutely. Seo ar dùthaich!*

Gnàthas -cainnt na Litreach: A thaobh ar fèin-aithne mar shluagh: as regards **our identity as a people**.

Tha "Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh" air a maoinachadh le MG ALBA