

An Litir Bheag
le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 422 (which corresponds to Litir 726). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

The long clean road, and the short dirty road. That's a Gaelic proverb. Perhaps the long road is the best one, although it is longer. The long clean road, and the short dirty road.

That proverb appears in an old Gaelic story – The Man Who Got the Three Pieces of Advice. Here is the story.

There was once a man. He left the house, looking for work. He left his wife and son at the house. He was away for a long time.

He was about to go home again. The employer came. He said, 'I have advice for you. It's going to cost you a third of the money you made here. Will you take it?'

'Yes,' said the other man.

'Take the long clean road,' said the employer, 'rather than the short dirty road.' That was his advice.

The other man gave over the money. The employer said he had another piece of advice for him. 'But,' he said, 'it will cost you half of the money you made here.' The other man said that would be okay.

'Well,' said the employer, 'my advice for you is not to spend a night in a house in which there is an old man and a young wife.'

An rathad fada glan, 's an rathad goirid salach. Sin seanfhacal Gàidhlig. 'S dòcha gur e an rathad fada am fear as fheàrr, ged a tha e nas fhaide. An rathad fada glan, 's an rathad goirid salach.

Tha an seanfhacal sin a' nochdadh ann an seann stòiridh Gàidhlig – Am Fear a Fhuair na Trì Comhairlean. Seo agaibh an stòiridh.

Bha fear ann uaireigin. Dh'fhàg e an taigh a lorg obair. Dh'fhàg e a bhean agus a mhac aig an taigh. Bha e air falbh fad ùine mhòr.

Bha e an impis falbh dhachaigh a-rithist. Thàinig am fear-fastaidh. Thuirt e, 'Tha comhairle agam dhut. Tha i a' dol a chosg dhut trian dhen airgead a rinn thu an seo. An gabh thu i?'

'Gabhaidh,' thuirt am fear eile.

'Gabh an rathad fada glan,' thuirt am fear-fastaidh, 'seach an rathad goirid salach.' B' e sin a chomhairle.

Thug am fear eile an t-airgead seachad. Thuirt am fear-fastaidh gun robh comhairle eile aige dha. 'Ach,' thuirt e, 'cosgaidh i leth dhen airgead a rinn thu an seo.' Thuirt am fear eile gum biodh sin ceart gu leòr.

'Uill,' thuirt am fear-fastaidh, 's e a' chomhairle agam dhut gun oidhche a chur seachad ann an taigh anns a bheil seann duine agus bean òg.'

The other man was about to leave. The employer said to him, 'I have a third piece of advice for you. But it will cost the rest of your wages.' The other man said he would accept the advice.

'My third piece of advice,' said the employer, 'is that you don't do anything on an evening or night without reflecting on whether you might regret it the next day.'

The man made ready to leave for home. The employer gave him a loaf of bread. 'Give this to your wife,' he said.

The man left on the road home. A horse rider came up. The two men were chatting. They came together to a short-cut. The rider said he was going to take the short road.

But the other man remembered the first piece of advice. He took the long road. We'll see what happened to both of them next week.

Bha am fear eile an impis falbh. Thuirt am fear-fastaidh ris, 'Tha treas comhairle agam dhut. Ach cosgaidh i an còrr dhen tuarastal agad.' Thuirt am fear eile gun gabhadh e ris a' chomhairle.

'S e mo threas comhairle,' thuirt am fear-fastaidh, 'nach dèan thu sian idir air feasgar no oidhche gun a bhith a' meòrachadh air co-dhiù bidh aithreachas ort air a shon air an ath latha.'

Rinn am fear deiseil airson falbh dhachaigh. Thug am fear-fastaidh lof arain dha. 'Thoir seo dha do bhean,' thuirt e.

Dh'fhalbh am fear air an rathad dhachaigh. Thàinig marcaiche suas. Bha an dithis a' seanachas. Thàinig iad còmhla gu geàrr-rathad. Thuirt am marcaiche gun robh esan a' dol a ghabhail an rathaid ghoirid.

Ach chuimhnich am fear eile a' chiad chomhairle. Thug esan an rathad fada. Chì sinn dè thachair don dithis aca an-ath-sheachdain.