



The following text is written by Chris Manson, a comic creator based in Glasgow, and was originally written for The Chinese University of Hong Kong as part of a project on linguistic diversity.

Burns Nicht

Hullo! Ma name's Chris, or else you kin cry me A-Lau.

Ah'm fae Hong Kong masel – Ah wis born oan the island, and ma Maw's side o the faimly comes fae Sha Tin, near Tai Wai. Ma Paw's side o the faimly, hooever, cam fae Scotland. A toon ca'd Paisley, which ye nicht ken fae its famous textiles!

Noo, Ah moved wi ma Maw, ma Paw, and ma wee sister back when Ah wis just a wean, sae Ah've lived maist o ma life here in Scotland. Scotland's a wunnerful place, wi bonnie countryside aye jist doon the road, the warmest fowk ye could ivver hope tae meet, and plenty o history tae it, tae!

Nae doot ye've mibbe heard o wir famous son, the People's Poet Robbie Burns. He wis a crackin sciever, wan o the best – he wrote poems aboot aw sorts: hings he saw in everyday life, his loves, his pals, neebors wham he didnae particularly like... Aw the wey through tae mair fantastic fare, lik bogles and witchies and Auld Nick hisself!

Weel, he wis sic a great sciever that every year, oan January the twinty-fifth, we Scots hiv a richt guid hoolie in his honour! It's mibbe no a holiday richt enough, but whit a fuss is made! At the schule, ye'd be learnin and recitin his maist famous works – “Tae a Moose” is aye the favourite fur bairns aw ower the place! Or if ye're wee bit aulder and intae the singin, ye nicht hae a bash at “Scots Wha Hae”, or a rousin round of “Ye Jacobites By Name”. Aw, that song aye gets ma blood up, so it does!

Maist important of aw – whether it's at hame wi your faimly, or at a social or a club o some kind – it's the scan. The traditional Burns Supper.

D'ye ken whit Haggis is? There's mony wha'd scoff at it wha've nivver even tried it, but Ah love it – Ah aye huv! It's a wee bit like a sausage, I suppose, an ye bile it for a bit and there's a kind o rich spicy mince inside. But afore ye stick a dirk in it and slice it open, ye've tae gie it proper respect, like – there a grand auld poem that Burns hissel wrote, ca'd “Tae A Haggis” that sings its praises and gies thanks tae it fur its simplicity, and feeding aw o us ower the years.

Noo, the haggis is jist wan part o the meal – traditionally, ye huv it wi a wee daud neeps and tatties. And if it's ma granny makin them, enough white pepper tae tickle yer neb! Of course, as they say, ye can tak the boy oot fae Hong Kong, but ye'll nivver tak the Hong Kong fae oot the boy – in ma hoose, it wis only ma Paw wha hud the tatties. Fur me, ma maw, and ma





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sister, it was Haggis and biled rice! Auld habits die hard, ye ken! We were still made tae eat wir neeps, o course – tae mak us big and strong, or so we were telt. I still huv rice wi ma haggis tae this day, though ithers micht ca me daft fur it – it’s ma tradition and Ah’m stickin wi it!

And o course, nae Burns Supper is complete without a wee nip o the cratur – if ye’re auld enough, there’s almost certainly a wee dram o a guid single malt whisky fur ye afore the nicht ends. And if ye’re no, it’s a gless o Scotland’s ithier national drink – Irn Bru! Delicious, fizzy, and it glows a healthy radioactive orange colour tae.

Onyway, Ah’ve probably blethered oan lang enough. Ah hope ye’ve enjoyed hearin aboot ma faimly’s weird wee Burns Nicht Tradition. Ah’ll leave you wi a slightly cleaner version o a guid toast tae swally yer Burns Nicht dram tae, fae ma Grandpaw the sailor:

Wha’s like us? No mony, and they’re aw deid!



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