

Paper II
Some common Features in Irish Gaelic and Hindu Societies
Liam SS Réamonn
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[I] Mahatma Ghandi

The long-lost comradeship between Celt and Hindu was evidenced when Mahatma Ghandi could say that he took inspiration in bringing about Indian independence from the struggles of the Irish people. Ireland, a country of insignificant extent, had caught the special interest of this great and spiritual leader. Originally the Celtic appearance in Europe, from near the Caspian Sea, came at the same time as another migration into India and Iran. It has been postulated that Proto-Celts and Hindus had common ancestry in the Battle Axe People in southern Russia. Elements of pre-historic art still exist in the ethnic jewellery of India and Ireland.

[II] Evidence of Indo-European religious Links between Gaeldom and Hindustan

Indo-European ancients, observing nature and drawing from its manifestations, deduced eternal truths with skill and in such manner as to give guidance and true meaning to the lives of generations to come. Gaelic and Hindu sagas are compelling.

Hindu, Celtic, Teutonic and Greek mythologies contain the same conceptual groundwork. The powers of nature are given human form. Vedic brahmans and Celtic, Norse and Latin poets taught that the sky, sun, moon, earth, mountains, forests, seas and underworld were ruled by beings like their own temporal leaders but more powerful and subject to higher authority. Hinduism was materially influenced by the Kashyapa Buddha. It is, nonetheless, the only form of ancient Indo-European beliefs still widely practised.

Orthodox Hindus today increasingly proclaim the universal Vedic truths. Gaelic 'Vedic-type' religion had no outside influence until the Gael adopted Christianity in 432 AD. Whilst much Indo-European tradition was then lost, it is still a factor, especially in Gaelic refuges (optimistically termed 'Gaeltacht Areas' or 'Areas of Gaeldom'). Krishna, the Supreme Lord, is worshipped as the eighth Avatar of [Lord Vishnu](#). His is an intensely human form, as described in Hindu epics. His exploits ('Krishna Leela') are a popular theme for artists. The Sanskrit root 'krish' means 'existence'. In Irish, His name can perhaps be derived from 'croí/croidhe' (m, heart/core), with dental exchange in the final consonant of the old spelling. He was a manifestation of God's love and existence, eternally free from the laws of matter, time and space.

The Bhagavad-Gītā, the sacred Hindu 'song of God' was composed about 200 BC. It discusses the purpose of life. The following verses underscore its universality.

Chapter 2 (25): *It is said that the soul is invisible, inconceivable, immutable and unchangeable. Knowing this, you should grieve not for the body.*

Chapter 4 (35): *And when you have thus learned to speak the truth, you will know that all living beings are but part of Me [the Lord Krishna] - and that they are in Me and are Mine.*

Chapter 7 (6): *Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I [the Lord Krishna] am both the origin and the dissolution.*

Chapter 7 (22): *Endowed with such faith, he seeks favours of the demigods and obtains his requests. But in actuality these benefits are bestowed by Me alone.*

Of the original northern Indian tribes, the Druhyu name corresponds to the Gaelic 'draoithe' ('druids'). This root has survived with a certain semantic range in Germanic and Slavonic languages too. The Anus gave their name to the Irish goddess Anu (or Danu). Her (pre-Celtic) adherents, the Tuatha Dé Danann, went to live underground. They ruled from tumulí, perhaps a reflection of an earlier culture. The priestly class of the Anus, the BhRgu, may correspond to the Celtic goddess Brigit, whose tradition was Christianised, for preservation. The goddess' spoked sun sign is as alive today in India as it is in Ireland. An association may also exist with the Rig-Veda.

Bk 4, Hymn L: *Brhaspati, when first he had his being from mighty splendour in Heaven most supreme.*

The Sanskrit for priest – 'brAhmNa' must bear a close relationship with the Irish 'breitheamh' (O. Ir. 'brithem') or 'judge'. The Irish 'curtha' or 'put' may be cognate with the word Sanskrit itself - 'samskrta' or 'put together/perfected'.

[III] Evidence of a direct Link between Hindus and Celts

Evidence for the interrelationship between the forebears of the Hindus and the Gael comes from an Indo-European heritage. An example of direct Celtic in-put into Hindu culture, long after the two peoples had gone their separate ways, is the Sanskrit word for 'war chariot'. Expanding political power, as well as long-distance trade, wrought cultural influences in the ancient world. Use of this particular word may reflect an anticipation of the wave of Celtic conquests, which came as far as Anatolia.

Chapter 1 (24) of the Bhagavad-Gītā reads as follows: "*Sañjaya said, O descendent of Bharata, having been thus addressed by Arjuna, Lord Krisna drew up the fine chariot in the midst of the armies of both parties.*"

There is synonymy in PIE languages for 'wheel': the Greek 'kýklos' and Latin 'rota' (O Ir 'reth'). The 'rota' was an advanced, spoked wheel, dating from the start of the 2nd millennium BC. The principle of morpho-semantic density makes 'rota' a Celtic word. In Sanskrit 'rátha-' means 'chariot'.

[IV] Folkloric Links

Folklore shows that the ancient Irish were well aware of Asia. Gaelic mythology reaches far to the East, showing both old memories and how widely the ancients travelled. The first Irishman was a Scythian king called Fenius Farsa. He was overthrown and fled to Egypt. His son, Niul, married the Pharaoh's daughter. They had a daughter called Scota. She in turn had a son called Goidel, after whom the Gael are called.

In the 5th century BC, Egypt was part of a Persian Aryan empire, which stretched as far east as the Punjab. Briciu Nemthenga (Briciu of the Poison Tongue) has been compared with Loki, a mischief-maker of the Germanic pantheon of gods. The story of the Feast of Briciu tells of the 'Champion's Covenant' - the wager with the Baclach (giant). He had gone through Europe, Africa and Asia in search of Honour, by making clever wagers.



Kali

Medb is one of the Celtic goddesses of dawn and dusk: her pyramid is in Sligo. Kuno Meyer and Heinrich Zimmer both thought this name to have been carried by an historical queen of Connacht. That is probably true. She probably donned the mantle of the legendary figure. The name has been related to the Sanskrit *madhu* ('honey' or 'sweet drink'). *Madhu* is also one of the Daityas, a clan of evil spirits, who opposed sacrifice to the gods.

Female figures called 'Sheela-na-Gigs' (Sileadh na gCíoch) appear in Irish churches and castles of the 12th to the 16th centuries. Possible meanings for the carvings have been suggested, usually of a flighty nature. A 1996 National Museum booklet surmises that the figures represent an early Celtic or Indo-European earth-goddess. In 1979, a Sheela-na-Gig had featured in a French exhibition of Serbian archaeology, dating from 4500-4800 BC. People had probably come over from Anatolia, bringing idols of their deities.

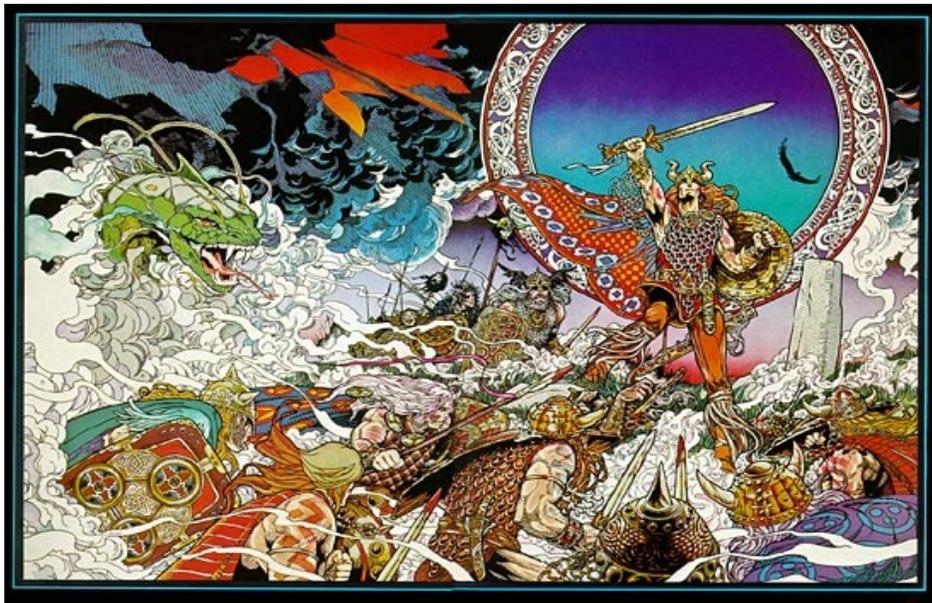
The Hindu goddess of destruction, Kali, is also a mother goddess. Her statue is comparable with a Sheela. The word Kali appears to be related to the Irish 'Cailleach' (shrouded woman). There is a Stone Age Cemetery, dating from 3200 BC, at Loughcrew in the county Meath. It comprises some 30 passage tombs. The cemetery is located on a hill. When the Celts arrived, they called it 'Sliabh na Caillí' – the Hill of the Shrouded Woman.

Indian folklore includes tales of humans taking on animal forms. In parallel, one of the Three Sorrowful Tales of Erin tells of the Fate of the Children of Tuireann. There was enmity between Cian, the father of Lug, and the three sons of Tuireann. As Cian prepared for the battle of Mag Tuired, he saw them approach and, outnumbered, he changed his shape into that of a pig. Brian, having changed his brothers Iuchair and Iucharba into hounds, attacked and speared the pig. Cian asked to be returned to human form before he died. He was and was then slain. An *éiric* (blood fine) was placed upon the brothers. This included obtaining the ‘spear of Assal’ from the King of Iran.

[V] Musical Links

Sitar music is composed as the musician plays. To gain mastery, he will study the instrument for twenty years. The sitar may have come to India in the 13th century from Iran (*seh* – three, *tar* – string - as in *guitar*). The instrument was modified to cope with the idiom of the more ancient Indian music. The Irish harp is thought to have originated in Sumeria. It is three-sided and stringed. In 1603, the English Lord President of Munster, Henry Brouncker, ordered ‘the extermination by martial law of all manner of Gaelic bards, harpers etc.’. 5. Queen Elizabeth herself ordered Lord Barrymore to ‘hang the harpers wherever found’.

In music, the use of memorised patterns continues today in both India and Ireland. With Irish *sean-nós* (‘old method’) singing, songs, committed to memory, tell tales of long ago. This form of music is very old and, elsewhere in Europe, would appear only to persist in isolated parts of Sicily. The art form may share a common origin with Middle Eastern music. Again farther east, the slow, often mournful, Gaelic airs will resonate rhythmically with the melodic progression of traditional Indian music. Hindu hymn chanting has religious significance. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu practised Kīrtana, teaching that the Hindu chants the name of the Lord Krishna, in the perspective that the name of the Lord and the Lord are not different. Fixing his mind on the Supreme Lord, he can attain Krishna consciousness. By carrying his meditation into daily life, he becomes a disciplined, focussed person. The ancient ‘Dord Fiann’ {the chant of Fionn Mac Cumhail and his warriors, ‘na Fianna’ (the Stags)} was perhaps such chanting, coming from the first stirrings of Indo-European wonder at the shining skies. (The Irish ‘spéir’ means ‘sky, beauty, brightness’.)



Nuada The High King

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[VI] The legal Systems

The Brehon laws are a repository of ancient legal procedures. Some of these date back 3,000 years. They were inherited or procured by Celtic wanderers from various members of the far-flung Indo-European family. It has been suggested that the 'blush fine' was an import from Asia. The Hindu practice of sitting dharma recalls ancient connections too. The Brehon laws have been criticised with unsupported and shallow comment. Eoin Mac Néill wrote, in 1934, that even Ireland's enemies in the time of Elizabeth and James I noted the Irish love for law and justice.⁶

Certain Gaelic and Hindu legal provisions⁷ may be compared, as follows:

- 1) By Celtic law a man owed money could fast at the door of the debtor, who must join the fast, so forcing him to pay or enter arbitration. By Hindu law, a creditor might fast at the door of the debtor, who was then obliged to protect the health of the creditor and pay the debt.
- 2) The Celtic Realm of all Life is called 'bitus' [cf the modern Irish phrase 'ar bith' ('at all')]. Gods are called 'deuos' (shining ones). The Vedic earth-world is called 'bhu'. Gods in the Vedas are invoked as 'devas' (shining ones).
- 3) There are Celtic deities for the natural forces, ethics, justice, knowledge, speech, arts, crafts, medicine, harvests, war, courage and battle against the forces of darkness. There are goddesses of land, rivers and motherhood. Gods often have a number of functions. The Vedic pantheon includes deities for justice, rituals, ethical/ecological order, medicine, speech, arts, crafts, fire, solar, atmospheric and natural forces, harvests, war and battlers against malevolent beings. There are river goddesses. Gods often have a number of functions.

4) Druids studied for 20 years, in a strict discipline, to learn ritual laws and science. Brahmans studied for 12 years in a gurukulana, to learn ritual laws, mathematics and astronomical science. Ireland operated a democracy, which was advanced in concept, under the Brehon Laws. Like Vedic practices, they gave a strong legal status to women⁸. The Brehon legal format compares with that in 13th century Asia, devised by the Mongol Genghis Khan. He was the leader of the largest land empire ever won. The title Genghis Khan means 'Oceanic Head' –where 'khan' is cognate with the Irish 'ceann'.

The Irish system comprised regulations on every aspect of life. Regulations were used rather than a system of legal precedent. The Gaelic kingdoms of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man were too widespread to have a central authority. The strength of the system was that it operated well, throughout the historic Gaeltacht, for about a thousand years.

The Common Law of Feudalism was imposed in Ireland, as a method of subjugation, when the Gaelic leadership had been exiled.

The constitutional system of Genghis Khan also comprised a body of regulations called the Great Yasa (code).⁹ There were regulations e.g. on taxation, the postal service, military inspections and unauthorised military leave. The Yasa saw a revitalisation amongst Uzbeks, Kazaks, Turkmen, Tajiks and northern Afghans in the 1500s. In the 1600s, the Genghisid lineages faded in Central Asia, some moving to India.

[VII] Enduring linguistic Connections

Ireland and Hindustan are closer to their common origins than many people might expect. A very brief comparison between the Irish and Hindi languages - looking at basic structure, phraseology and vocabulary - provides additional firm evidence of this. Importantly, there was never a period of cultural decay such that an extensive innovation followed, to circumvent the loss of inflection and structure. Prefixes and suffixes can tend to occlude the identification of root syllables. The final syllables of Indo-European words are inflected (to show case or tense) and, except for patterns of change, are generally not useful for tracing connections.

The Romanised system is not sufficiently sensitive to the requirements of Hindi phonology. Modern Irish spelling is also wanting as regards Irish phonology. The linguistic comparisons made are based upon observation of the modern languages.

(i) *Basic Structure*

Many people will not have studied languages other than those of Aryan origin. Simple examples in Chinese (using pinyin script) show completely unfamiliar linguistic constructions. Common usages in Irish and Hindi are likely to represent long-preserved connections.

Verbs

Hindi: The suffix ‘*nā*’ is added to the root to form a verb: *jānā*: to go - *ānā* to come.

Irish: Verbal noun suffixes: *ag glanadh* (at cleaning), *ag socrú* (at deciding)

Chinese: There are adjectival or stative verbs, which do not change form. (Tense is normally shown by context.)

Present Tense

Hindi: *tu jāta/jāti* (m/f) *hai*: you go (auxiliary verb used)

yahān ek khān hai: there is a mine here

yah an de bahut kare hai: these eggs are too hard (note the plural verb form)

tu ja raha hai: you are going (continuous present)

Irish: *tá an ghaoth láidir*: the wind *is* strong

tá na huibheacha briste: the eggs are *broken*

táimid ag rith: we are *at running* (auxiliary verb ‘to be’ used with continuous present)

Perfect and Future Tenses – Hindi, Irish and Chinese

Hindi Past Perfect: A transitive verb agrees with the object, in number and gender.

Intransitive Perfect: *woh bolā*: he spoke - Past Perfect: *woh bolā hai*: he has spoken (auxiliary verb used)

Transitive Perfect: *us ne das*

ghore dekhe: he saw ten horses

Irish: *rinne sé a dhícheall*: *he did* his best - *ní dhearna siad a ndícheall*: *they did not do* their best (dependent form of the verb)

Hindi and Irish: *main dūngā*: I shall give - *tabhairfaidh mé*: I shall give (Latin ‘dare’ is evident.)

Chinese: *wǒ māng*: I [was/shall be/will be/would have been etc.] *busy*

tā hěn māng: he *very* busy - *wǒ māng míng tiān*: I busy tomorrow

wǒ māng hòu tiān: I busy day after tomorrow

Imperative – Hindi, Irish and Chinese

Irish does not have an Imperative of Respect, which is an exceptional feature in Hindi. Normally, Hindi uses the plural form of verbs as the polite form – comparable with most European tongues. Irish has the same system as Latin – one form for the singular and one for the plural. The use of special polite forms is difficult for Irish people to grasp. All of Gaelic society had a strong sense of brotherhood.

Hindi: *jā*: go (thou) - *ā*: come (thou) - *jāo*: go (thou) - *āo*: come (thou)

jāie: (please) go - *āie* (please) come –

mere būt utāro aur silpat lāo: take off my boots and bring me my slippers

Irish: imigh: go (thou) - imigí: go (ye)

Fág salach an fhuinneog agus ní fheicfidh tú mórán: leave (thou) dirty the window and you will not see much.

Chinese: A tone-of-voice word ('ba') is added to the end of a sentence to indicate a command: Qǐng hē yì-diǎr chá *ba*: please drinking little bit tea *OK!*

Nouns – Irish, Hindi and Chinese

Irish and Hindi have lost the neuter gender. Nouns are defined as masculine or feminine. They are declined: Hindi using two of the original Indo-European eight cases. Modern Irish uses five. Old Irish had a locative case, still seen in place-names.

Chinese nouns are not declined (pronouns change in the plural). They are given no gender. There are no definite or indefinite articles. Unlike Hindi and Gaelic, there is no correspondence with adjectives either. Meaning, again, is given by context. Certain grammarians see dropping grammatical rules as a sign of linguistic development. This is, perhaps, because synthetic Indo-European languages have dropped most of the rules on inflection.

The argument is fallacious: meanings of Lǎo péng-you are as follows: an (the) old friend(s); to, with, of, by or from an (the) old friend(s) etc. Indeed, grammarians of non-Indo-European languages have argued that inflections refine meaning. A study on the value of nuanced implications might answer the question.

In both Hindi and Irish, consonants may be aspirated. In Irish, lenition of initial consonants may be reversible, in order to show a change in case or tense. As in the case of Irish, German and Arabic, Hindi has long and short vowels.

(ii) Phraseology - Questions in Hindi, Irish and Chinese

An intonation of voice is used in Hindi and Irish.

Hindi: yah strī kaun hai? who is this woman?

kitne din lageṅge? how long will it take?

Irish: The verb (in the dependent form) is preceded by the word 'an':

an bhfuil siad *ag teacht*? are they *atcoming*?

Chinese: The sentence stays the same: there is no change in intonation. The tone-of-voice word 'ma' is added to show the speaker wants information. (The tone of Chinese syllables already determines their meaning.)

Tā huì shuō Zhōng-guo huà *ma*? He able speaking China words *yes*?

(iii) Vocabulary

A list of some eighty-five comparable lexemes found in modern Irish and Hindi is shown below. The words point to a more extensive vocabulary of common origin. The only real connection between Irish and Hindi is from the original Indo-European. Below, etymological processes are suggested to indicate possible changes in words.

Irish

croí/croidhe (m, heart/core – dental exchange)

aon (one)
dó (two)
trí (three)
ceathar (four)
cúig (five)
sé (six)
seacht (seven)
ocht (eight)
naoi (nine)
deich (ten)
dhá uair (twice, b in bar to bh = v, w)
ainm (name)
anaithnid (unknown)
athair (father - Latin pater)
báigh (to drown)
bard (bard)
barr (top)
bláth (flower)
bodhar (deaf)
bráthar (brother, kinsman)
cad (what?)
cá háit (where? - see German 'ort')
cathain (when?)
cé (who?)
ceo (fog)
cill (church)
clann (family)
crann (tree)
cruaidh (hard)
chuaigh (went)
claoi (ditch)
cuan (harbour)
dáil (to distribute)
dána (brave, enterprising)
deachar (difficult)
díomách (disappointed)
dorcha (dark)
dord (chant)
duairc (gloomy)
dubh (dark, miserable)
eallach (cattle)
fáil (to find – aspiration and dental exchange)
fás (to grow)
gadhar (dog)

Hindi

Krishna the Supreme Lord, eighth avatar of Vishnu

ek (one)
do (two)
tīn (three)
chār (four)
pāñch (five - see Welsh 'pump', q to p)
chhe (six)
sat (seven)
āth (eight)
nau (eight)
das (ten)
do bār (twice)
nam (name)
anāth (orphan)
pitā (father)
bādh flood
bhāṭ (bard)
barā (great)
phūl (flower – b to ph, epenthetic vowel)
baharā (deaf)
bhāī (brother, lost r)
kyā (what? – aspirate Irish 'd')
kidhar (where?)
kab (when? nasal to b)
kaun (who? – lose nasal 'n')
kohra (fog)
kīlā (fort)
kul (family – epenthetic vowel)
pēṛ (tree – q to p, epenthetic vowel)
karā (hard), krodh (anger)
gayā (went)
khāī (ditch)
kuāñ (well)
dalāl (broker)
dhanī (rich)
dushkar (difficult)
dhīmā (slow)
andhera (dark)
dhol (drum – dental exchange)
darnā (to be afraid)
dukhī (miserable)
galla (herd – lenition of g)
pānā (to find)

fasal (crop)
gadha (donkey)

garbh (rough)
gob (beak, mouth)
gráinn (hate)
gual (coal)
labhairt (to speak)
lobhtha (rotten)
log (a place – of people)
mallaithe (vicious)
marbh (dead)
máthair (mother)
meon (mind)
mór (big)
nocht (naked)
oilthrecht (pilgrimage – loss of initial t)

an t-ola (the oil)
pár (parchment)
paróisde (parish)
poc (goat)
poll (hole)
príomh- (prefix – ‘of first place’)
rang (row, line)
saibhir (wealthy)
sámh (pleasant)
samhlú (to imagine)
sásta (satisfied)
seomra (room)
snámh (to swim)
socrú (to decide)
solas (m light)
sona (happy)
striapach (harlot)
tafann (bark, noise)
tír (country)
tóchar (tunnelled drain)
tóir (trail)
torann (noise)
uair (hour – lenition of initial g)
uain (lamb)
údar (authority - original giver, úr + Latin *dare*)
uisce (water), os (dew),

garj (thunder)
gap shap karnā (chat)
ghrinā (aversion, disgust)
koelā (charcoal, coal)
bolnā (to speak – metathesis)
lobh (avarice)
log (people)
mailá (dirty)
mar jānā, marnā (to die)
māṇ (mother)
man (mind)
motā (fat)
naṅgā (naked)
tīrthyātrī (pilgrim – metathesis, exchange of dentals)
tel (oil)
parhnā (to read)
parosī (neighbour)
bakrā (goat)
polā (hollow)
prem karnā (to love: príomh ~ prem)
rang (colour, line in the rainbow)
sabhya (polite)
sāf karnā (to clean)
samajhnā (to understand)
sastā (cheap)
kamara (room)
snān karno (to have a bath)
sochnā (to think)
sulgānā (to light), sūraj (sun)
sundar (beautiful)
strī (woman)
tūfānī (stormy)
tīr (coast, arrow)
tokrī (basket – its shape the root meaning)
talāsh (search – dental exchange)
tornā (to break)
gharī (clock)
ūṇ (wool - metonymy)
udar (generous - original giver)

bhistī (water-carrier)

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