

Subhashita 3. Gentle words

One of my earliest memories as a child is my mother telling me to speak in gentle tones. So much so that the ubiquitous गॉ and रँ had been unceremoniously banished and the gentler मा was the accepted form of address. For the non-Konkani speaking people, these terms are the Konkani equivalents to the Hindi "अरे ओ ". The गॉ (as in "gone") is used for women and the रँ (as in "rat") for the men. They are also used as fillers and punctuation marks when conversing, thus making the language extraordinarily colourful. They aren't really ungentle; it's just a matter of personal opinion; but my inability to use them (courtesy my mom) has sadly curbed my powers of expression.

The law at home is this, 'If you can express yourself with gentleness and thus get an idea across with ease, get your work done and maintain harmony...isn't it, all in all, a better deal? So if you can't speak gently, don't speak at all.' I strongly suspect that my parents must have gotten a hold of this subhashita when rules for "behaving at home and in the outside world" were being set.

प्रियवाक्यप्रदानेन सर्वे तुष्यन्ति जन्तवः ।
तस्मात्तदेव वक्तव्यं वचने का दारिद्रता ॥

प्रियवाक्य kind and gentle words; प्रदानेन by gifting away; सर्वे जन्तवः all people; तुष्यन्ति are satisfied. तस्मात्तदेव = तस्मात् (literally - from that; but here it conveys the meaning 'therefore') + तत् (that) + एव (only; alone); वक्तव्यं should be spoken. वचने in speech; का दारिद्रता why the scarcity (of kind words)?
