Limbu-English Dictionary

of the Mewa Khola dialect

with English-Limbu index

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In Memory of Hallvard Kåre Kuløy

Introduction

The present dictionary is based on materials gathered in the field in 1977-1978 and slightly revised with informants in subsequent years. The original research was carried out in the village of Libang, in the Mewa Khola, where, on the recommendation of our friend Philippe Sagant, Martine Mazaudon and I worked during the monsoon of 1977. Later that same year, however, Libang was included in the restricted northern border area, and I moved to Tembe, in the neighboring Maiwa Khola valley. (I was able to return to Libang in 1999.) Although the Maiwa and Mewa valleys are traditionally considered as a single region by Limbus, the dialect of Tembe differs slightly from that of Libang, agreeing in some respects with the dialect of Phedap over the ridge to the south. The present work is based on both varieties, in particular on that of Libang, with occasional notes on dialect differences.

The dictionary covers the colloquial, spoken language. It is certainly not complete, but it is comparable in scope to existing bilingual Limbu-English dictionaries apart from the completed but still unpublished work of Bairagi Kainla et al., which is in a class by itself. Most of the material, insofar as it is accurate, probably applies to most Limbu dialects. The English-Limbu section is an index, not an English-Limbu dictionary.

Two aspects of the dictionary may interest specialized readers in particular. First, it provides data on the peculiarities of the Maiwa-Mewa dialect of Limbu. The material is restricted to this dialect in the interest of coherence. Second, it illustrates a relatively “strong” or restrictive approach to Limbu phonology, which I will describe in more detail elsewhere, and which seeks to define precisely the contexts in which various traits such as voicing, gemination, vowel length, and glottalization need to be taken into account. It is hoped that students of Limbu will evaluate this analysis against their own data (and vice-versa).

Certain areas which a dictionary might reasonably be expected to cover lie outside the scope of the present work. These include learned or literary vocabulary and Limbu orthography, which were unknown in the Maiwa-Mewa area at the time of the study, and most ritual formulas.

Transcription

The following letters are used in the dictionary to transcribe Limbu words and examples:

vowels	**a**, **i**, **u**, **e**, **ɛ**, **o**, **ɔ**		
length	**ː**		
glottalization	**ʔ**		
consonants	unaspirated stops:	aspirated stops:	nasals:
velar	**k**/**g**	**kh**/**gh**	**ŋ**
palatal affricate	**c**/**dz**	**ch**	
dental	**t**/**d**	**th**/**dh**	**n**
bilabial	**p**/**b**	**ph**/**bh**	**m**
glottal	**ʔ**		
	continuants and fricatives:		
	y, **r**, **l**, **w**		
	s, **h**		

The consonants listed above, with the exception of the glottal stop **ʔ**, constitute the inventory of consonants that may appear as syllable initials (or $\mathbf{C_i}$). The inventory of syllable-finals ($\mathbf{C_f}$) is **k**, **ŋ**, **t**, **n**, **p**, **m**, **ʔ**, and, under particular circumstances, **l** and **s**. The syllable has the structure $\mathbf{C_i V C_f}$ (but see exceptions below).

Voiced, unvoiced, and geminated stop consonants. Limbu does not distinguish between the unvoiced (**k**, **kh**, **c**, **t**, **th**, **p**, **ph**) and corresponding voiced (**g**, **gh**, **dz**, **d**, **dh**, **b**, **bh**) stop consonants, the pronunciation being dependent on the phonological context. Thus it would be possible to write Limbu using only the unvoiced stops, and indeed this is how Limbu was written in the 19th century Sirijanga script. In the present dictionary, only unvoiced stops are written at the beginning of whole words (as indicated by spacing). Thus no entries will be found under **g**, **gh**, **dz**, **d**, **dh**, **b**, **bh**, although words may be pronounced with voiced initial stops in certain contexts.

The dictionary renders the pronunciation of polysyllabic words by writing stops as voiced between vowels and after syllable-final nasal consonants (**ŋ**, **n**, **m**) and unvoiced after syllable-final stops (**k**, **t**, **p**). Thus, for example, the dictionary lists **kɔmbha** 'thus' (with voiced **bh** after the nasal **m**) and not **kɔmpha**, and **kughɛːk** 'one of a pair' (with voiced **gh** between vowels) rather than **kukhɛːk**, although the pronunciation is somewhat variable. Any stop consonant between vowels which can NEVER be pronounced as voiced is in fact a geminated (i.e. double) consonant and is written as such in the dictionary. For example, **maːkki** 'maize' may perhaps be heard as "maːki" but can never be pronounced "maːgi". The geminate stops are **kk**, **kkh**, **tc**, **tt**, **tth**, **pp**, **pph**.

Syllable-final stops and the glottal stop (ʔ). (See also glottalization, below.) Syllable-final stop consonants in Limbu are pronounced unreleased, with simultaneous glottal closure. In some words a simple glottal stop (that is, a closure in the throat with no oral closure) may be heard, especially before another consonant inside the word. This is particularly frequent before the initial consonants **y**, **l**, and **w**. Often there is an alternative pronunciation with a full oral final stop, for example, **maːkyu** or **maːʔyu** 'bear'.

Syllable-final l. The consonant combination "nl" does not occur, being replaced by **ll**; this is the one context in which **l** occurs as a syllable-final.

The consonant ch (pronounced [tɕh]) is a contextual variant of **s** in Limbu. In the Maiwa-Mewa dialect, **ch** appears only after **t** and **n**, while **s** occurs in other contexts. No word begins with **ch**. There is no voiced pronunciation ("z", "dzh") corresponding to **s** or **ch**.

Vowels and vowel length. The long vowels **iː**, **ɛː**, **aː**, **ɔː**, and **uː** must be distinguished from the corresponding short vowels in closed (consonant-ending) syllables. In open (vowel-ending) syllables, length is generally determined by word accent and other factors: for example, prefixes and suffixes are unaccented and rather short compared to roots, which are accented. The only open syllables for which length must be distinguished (and in which long vowels are written in the dictionary) are the initial syllables of verb forms based on the past stems of certain classes of verb with closed-syllable roots (nos. 4, 5, 8, 11, and 17 below).

The vowels **e** and **o** do not have distinct long and short versions. They are never written with length in the dictionary, although they may be heard as long.

Glottalization (ʔ). Glottalization, a kind of catch in the throat, is a feature of the vowel, like length; it occurs in open syllables. There is no distinction of length on glottalized vowels. Note that glottalization is represented by a different symbol from the full, consonantal glottal stop described earlier.

The clearest type of lexically-determined glottalization occurs in verb roots of class 3 (see below). In these verbs, the present stem ends in a glottalized vowel, and the past stem (which is always followed by a vowel-initial suffix) has the form **CVʔr-**, e.g. in **teʔru** 'he took it away'.

In word-final position it is necessary to distinguish between sporadic, intonational glottalization and phonological glottalization. Utterance-final glottalization may be used as an expressive device, for example, to give a peremptory tone. This often occurs with imperatives. Such glottalization is not part of the word and is not marked in the dictionary.

A certain number of words appear to have phonological word-final glottalization, and this is transcribed in the dictionary. Phonological final glottalization persists when a vowel-initial suffix is added to the word, for example **sidaʔ** 'medicine', **sidaʔ-ɛn** 'the medicine, as for the medicine'. This kind of glottalization may be somewhat variable between speakers.

Glottalization has also been indicated in hiatus (that is, where two vowels come together) in a few words (e.g. **waʔi** 'porcupine'); this kind of glottalization is also rather variable between speakers and dialects.

Syncopation or vowel reduction. The syllable in Limbu regularly has the structure (**C**$_{\mathbf{i}}$)**V**(**C**$_{\mathbf{f}}$), with the inventories of **C**$_{\mathbf{i}}$ and **C**$_{\mathbf{f}}$ as described above. Other patterns do occur, however, apparently as the result of syncopation, that is, loss of a vowel with reduction of the number of syllables in the word. In the dictionary, an apostrophe is written where loss of a vowel is hypothesized; it does not represent a sound, and it can be omitted from a practical orthography.

The first syllable **C**$_{\mathbf{i}}$**V** of certain words may be syncopated after a pronominal prefix. For example, **mura** 'mouth' becomes **ku-m'ra** 'his mouth', and **thɛgek** 'head' becomes **ku-dh'gek** 'his head'. Other words,

like **nara** ‘face’, do not undergo syncopation, possibly because of an accentual difference. Words whose prefixed forms are syncopated are indicated in the dictionary.

Consonant clusters and combinations. Syncopation is also seen in the past forms of a few verbs with **CV** roots, for example **t'yɛ** ‘he came’, from **tama** ‘to come’; the hypothetical unreduced form “tayɛ” never occurs. In fact, the only word-initial consonant groups are of the form **C'y** and **C'w**; they occur in about 20 other words, e.g. **c'waːt** ‘water’, **p'yat** ‘grasshopper’. These are no doubt syncopated from **cowaːt**, etc.

In addition to the expected C_fC_i combinations at syllable boundaries in polysyllabic words, anomalous combinations, often involving the consonant **r**, occur in words like **car'pphɛmba** ‘butterfly’ and **kikk'rɔkna** ‘a bird (Nep. *jurelī*)’. The consonant **r** (which normally does not occur as a syllable-final, or after another consonant) often appears in such combinations. When the combinations **n'r**, **ŋ'r**, or **m'r** occur between vowels, the nasal consonant is pronounced as the final of the preceding syllable. Thus **tiŋ'rek** ‘thorn’ is syllabified **tiŋ.rek**.

Elision. The apostrophe is also used to indicate elision. In particular, the vowel of the nominal suffixes **pa**, **ma** and of the infinitive suffix **ma** is elided before the definite suffix **ɛn** and the locative suffixes **ɛtmu**, **ɛttho**, etc., e.g. **kɛ-si-b'-ɛn** ‘the dead man’. The vowel of the latter suffixes is itself elided after other vowels, e.g. **thi-'n** ‘(as for) the beer’.

Juncture: prefixes and suffixes. To aid the reader, a number of prefixes, suffixes, postpositions and clitics are marked off by hyphens in examples in the dictionary. In particular, this applies to noun suffixes and postpositions, and to pronominal prefixes. Hyphens have no effect on pronunciation, and they do not necessarily indicate syllable divisions.

There is a general rule in Limbu that final consonants, like the **k** of **phak** ‘pig’, are pronounced as geminated (doubled) before suffixes or postpositions beginning with a vowel, and that is how they will be found written in the dictionary, e.g. **phakk-aŋ** ‘a pig, too’ (never “phag-aŋ”). This rule also applies to final consonants of prefixes before vowel-initial roots, as in **amm-uːt** ‘they call us’. The geminates that occur in this way are **kk**, **ŋŋ**, **tt**, **nn**, **pp**, **mm**; they are largely responsible for the characteristic rhythm of Limbu speech.

Initial stops, like the **p** of **paːn** ‘word’, are pronounced voiced after a prefix ending in a vowel or nasal, for example, **ku-baːnn-ɛn** ‘as for his word’. The same rule applies in compounds, and to the initials of suffixes. The voiced stops that occur in this way are **g**, **gh**, **dz**, **d**, **dh**, **b**, **bh**. The initial stops of independent, unprefixed words may also be voiced if the preceding context ends in a vowel, but this voicing is not reflected in the dictionary transcription.

Thus the dictionary shows the pronunciation of whole words, with their prefixes and suffixes. The drawback to this is that, for example, the element **baːnn** in the example **ku-baːnn-ɛn** (above) must be looked up under **paːn**. Two rules may be borne in mind: (1) no dictionary entry begins with a voiced stop, and (2) no entry begins or ends with a geminate consonant.

In verb forms, the boundary between the prefixes (if any) as a group and the stem is marked by a hyphen in the dictionary (e.g. **am-hip** ‘they strike us’). In some compound verbs, like **o~mɛtma** ‘to look’, the pre-verb is marked off by the sign ~. The juncture between the stem and the tense, agreement, and negative suffixes is not indicated, but other suffixes are separated from the rest of the verb by hyphens.

The only items that are listed as beginning with **r** in the dictionary are suffixes (e.g. **rɔt** ‘only’) and the second elements of compound verbs (e.g. **ya~rapma** ‘to sharpen’). All such items have alternate forms with initial **l**, which appear after a consonant (e.g. **thik-lɔt** ‘only one’ *vs* **nɛtchi-rɔt** ‘only two’; **ya~kɛl-laptun** ‘you do not sharpen it’ *vs* **ya~kɛ-raptu** ‘you sharpen it’).

Verb roots and stems

Verbs in the dictionary are listed in the infinitive form, composed of the present stem followed by the suffix **ma**, as is usual in Limbu dictionaries. Unfortunately, this form does not contain all the information needed to distinguish one verb from another, or to indicate how the past stem should be formed. Note, for example, that eight of the classes below, all with differently formed past stems, have infinitives of the form **CVm-ma**. For this reason, an artificial root form, from which both stems can be derived, is listed in the dictionary entries. The following table lists the form of the infinitive, the artificial root, the present stem, and the past

stem for each class of Limbu verb. Since the classes are distinguished only by the final consonants of the root and stems, and sometimes by vowel prosody, only these elements are fully transcribed in the table below. The (optional) initial consonant and the vowel, which remain constant for regular verbs, are represented as **CV-**.

Class	Infinitive	Root (√)	Present	Past	vowel length
1	**CV-ma**	**CV**	**CV**	**Cvy-**	not distinctive
2	**CV-ma**	**CVs**	**CV**	**CVs-**	not distinctive
2a	**CV-ma**	**CVss**	**CV**	**CVss-**	past stems short
3	**CVʔ-ma**	**CVʔ**	**CVʔ**	**CVʔr-**	not distinctive
4	**CV-ma**	**CVːr**	**CV**	**CVːr-**	past stems long
5	**CVt-ma**	**CVt**	**CVt**	**CVr-**	long or short
6	**CVt-ma**	**CVtt**	**CVt**	**CVtt-**	long or short
7	**CVm-ma**	**CVts**	**CVn**	**CVtch-**	long or short
8	**CVm-ma**	**CVn**	**CVn**	**CVr-**	short only
9	**CVm-ma**	**CVnt**	**CVn**	**CVnd-**	long or short
10	**CVm-ma**	**CVns**	**CVn**	**CVnch-**	short only
11	**CVk-ma**	**CVk**	**CVk**	**CVg-**	long or short
12	**CVk-ma**	**CVkt**	**CVk**	**CVkt-**	long or short
13	**CVŋ-ma**	**CVks**	**CVŋ**	**CVks-**	long or short
14	**CVŋ-ma**	**CVŋ**	**CVŋ**	**CVŋ-**	short only
15	**CVŋ-ma**	**CVŋt**	**CVŋ**	**CVŋd-**	short only
16	**CVŋ-ma**	**CVŋs**	**CVŋ**	**CVŋs-**	short only
17	**CVp-ma**	**CVp**	**CVp**	**CVb-**	long or short
18	**CVp-ma**	**CVpt**	**CVp**	**CVpt-**	long or short
19	**CVm-ma**	**CVps**	**CVm**	**CVps-**	long or short
20	**CVm-ma**	**CVm**	**CVm**	**CVm-**	short only
21	**CVm-ma**	**CVmt**	**CVm**	**CVmd-**	short only
22	**CVm-ma**	**CVms**	**CVm**	**CVms-**	short only

Notes on verb classes:

The class-numbers are arbitrary — it is preferable to refer to "roots in **p**", "roots in **ks**", etc., according to the root-finals.

Present stems have the structure (**C**$_i$)**V**(**C**$_f$) and can occur independently (for example, **haːp** 'he weeps'), while past stems have the structure (**C**$_i$)**V**(**C**$_f$)**C**$_i$- and are always followed by a suffix beginning with a vowel. Note that the

final consonant of a **CVC-** past stem is phonologically a syllable initial and therefore is voiced, not geminated, before the suffix vowel (**haːbɛ** 'he wept').

Infinitives of the form **CVt-ma** (from roots in **-t** or **-tt**) are very often pronounced **CVp-ma**.

Verb roots and stems in about half of the classes above (nos. 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19) may be distinctively long or short. For example, in class 17 (roots in **-p**), **thapma** 'to give birth' is short whereas **thaːpma** 'to be visible' is long. In the remaining classes, there is no need to distinguish length.

Open present/infinitive stems (classes 1, 2, 2a, and 4) have no distinctive length.

Class 1 verbs (open roots) all have the same, undifferentiated length. Some verbs with open roots have past stem forms in which the root vowel is amalgamated with the suffix, with no **y** glide (e.g. **co** 'he ate it' from **cama** 'to eat'), or is syncopated (e.g. **y'yɛ** 'he came down' (pronounced **yɛ**) from **yuma** 'to come down'). This fact is noted in the dictionary articles.

Classes 2 and 2a verbs (in **-s** and **-ss**) probably originally represent long and short roots in final **-s**. All have the same, undifferentiated length, however, in the present/infinitive stem. The past stem of class 2 verbs has the form **CVs-**, while class 2a has the form **CVss-** with a clearly short vowel. In the Maiwa-Mewa dialect, this latter category seems to be becoming confused with the former, and only the verb **nɛma** 'to lie, to be situated' and 'to put down' was consistently observed to have a past stem **CVss-** (**nɛss-**). These stems are the only place where geminate **ss** (or any syllable-final **s**) occurs.

Class 3 verbs, glottalized, all have the same, undifferentiated length.

Class 4 verbs all have the same, undifferentiated length in the present stem, which is open, and are long in the past stem (which is thus distinguished from that of classes 5 and 8).

Classes 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 20, 21, and 22 (that is, all roots with nasal $\mathbf{C_f}$ except roots in **-nt**) have short vowels. The vowels **e** and **o** do not occur in these classes, nor in class 2a. Roots in **nt** (class 9) may have short or long vowels (including **e**, **o**).

Verb paradigms

The prefixes and suffixes which indicate verb agreement are not listed in the dictionary. Tables 1 and 2 present the stems and affixes that are used to make the non-negative indicative and imperative forms of regular verbs. Transitive verbs may agree with both agent and object. In the

transitive sections of the tables, the rows correspond to the person and number of the agent (A), and the columns to the person and number of the object. Thus the formula for the form "you (pl.) strike him" will be found at the intersection of the row marked "2pl." and the column marked "3sg." The formula **kɛ-PA-um** indicates that the prefix **kɛ** and the suffix **um** are to be added to the past stem of the verb; the form is **kɛhiptum**. Only one formula is given, because there is no distinction of tense for this form, which can mean either 'you strike him' or 'you struck him'. In the case of intransitive and reflexive (e.g. **hipmasiŋŋa** 'I struck myself') forms, the person and number of the subject (S) is indicated.

Negative indicative forms add the negative prefix **mɛ** (**n** after another prefix) and suffix (**nɛn**~**ɛn**~**n**) to the positive form. Exception: the 1st sg. transitive form (with 3d person object) **PA-uŋ**(**siŋ**) has the negative **mɛ-PR-Na**(**siŋŋa**)-**n**. Negative imperatives are formed by adding the imperative suffixes and negative prefix to the present stem.

Alphabetical order

Headwords in the dictionary are listed in the following alphabetical order:

a, *b*, *bh*, **c**, *ch*, *d*, *dh*, *dz*, **e**, **ɛ**, *g*, *gh*, **h**, **i**, **k**, **kh**, **l**, **m**, **n**, **ŋ**, **o**, **ɔ**, **p**, **ph**, **r**, **s**, **t**, **th**, **u**, **w**, **y**

No headword in the dictionary begins with any one of the letters listed in italics above, that is, with any voiced stop (**b-**, **bh-**, etc.) or with **ch**. Length (**ː**), glottalization (**ʔ**), and glottal stop (**ʔ**) are ignored for purposes of alphabetization except where they distinguish forms that would otherwise be homographs. In ordering otherwise homographic forms, short vowels are classed before long, and long before glottalized.

Organization of entries

Within each entry, the headword (in phonological transcription) is followed by the part of speech (in italics) and the English definition (in plain roman type). Illustrative phrases or sentences (if any) follow the definition, each preceded by a large raised dot •. Each example is accompanied by an English translation in italics, marked off by a dash. The notation [T] before the part of speech is used in a few cases where the word is thought to be current in Tembe but not in Libang.

Transitive: Object →

↓A	1sg.	1du.incl.	1du.excl.	1pl.incl.	1pl.excl.
1sg.	Legend: Where tense is distinguished, the past form appears under the non-past. PR = present stem PA = past stem N is a morphophoneme realised as the nasal homorganic with the preceding stem-final, or as hiatus after an open stem.				
1du. incl.					
1du. excl.					
1pl. incl.					
1pl. excl.					
2sg.	kɛ-PR-Na kɛ-PA-aŋ	akɛ-PR akɛ-PA-ɛ			
2du.					
2pl.					
3sg.	PR-Na PA-aŋ	a-PR-si a-PA-ɛsi	PR-sigɛ PA-ɛsigɛ	a-PR a-PA-ɛ	PA-igɛ
3du.	mɛ-PR-Na mɛ-PA-aŋ	am-PR-si am-PA-ɛsi	mɛ-PR-sigɛ mɛ-PA-ɛsigɛ	am-PR am-PA-ɛ	mɛ-PA-igɛ
3pl.					

Intransitive: Subject →

	PR-Na PA-aŋ	a-PR-si a-PA-ɛsi	PR-sigɛ PA-ɛsigɛ	a-PR a-PA-ɛ	PA-igɛ

Reflexive: Subject →

	PR-Nasiŋŋa	a-PR-nɛsi	PR-nɛsigɛ	a-PR-Nasi	PR-Nasigɛ

Table 1 : Indicative paradigm

Transitive: Object →

↓A	2sg.	2du.	2pl.	3sg.	3du.	3pl.
1sg.	PR-nɛ	PR-nɛsiŋ	PR-(nɛ)niŋ	PA-uŋ	PA-uŋsiŋ	
1du. incl.	PR-nɛsigɛ			a-PR-su	a-PR-susi	
				a-PA-usi		
1du. excl				PR-sugɛ	PR-susigɛ	
				PA-usigɛ		
1pl. incl	PR-Nasigɛ (PR-nɛsigɛ)			a-PA-um	a-PA-umsim	
1pl. excl				PA-umbɛ	PA-umsimbɛ	
2sg.				kɛ-PA-u	kɛ-PA-usi	
2du.				kɛ-PR-su	kɛ-PR-susi	
				kɛ-PA-usi		
2pl.				kɛ-PA-um	kɛ-PA-umsi	
3sg.	kɛ-PR kɛ-PA-ɛ	kɛ-PR-si kɛ-PA-ɛsi	kɛ-PA-i	PA-u	PA-usi	
3du.	kɛm-PR kɛm-PA-ɛ	kɛm-PR-si kɛm-PA-ɛsi	kɛm-PA-i	PR-su	PR-susi	
				PA-usi		
3pl.				mɛ-PA-u	mɛ-PA-usi	

Intransitive:

	kɛ-PR kɛ-PA-ɛ	kɛ-PR-si kɛ-PA-ɛsi	kɛ-PA-i	PR PA-ɛ	PR-si PA-ɛsi	mɛ-PR mɛ-PA-ɛ

Reflexive:

	kɛ-PR-siŋ	kɛ-PR-nɛsi	kɛ-PR-Nasi	PR-siŋ	PR-nɛsi	mɛ-PR-siŋ

Table 1 : Indicative paradigm (cont.)

	Transitive				Intrans.	Reflexive
↓A/S	→O: 1sg.	1pl.	3sg.	3pl.	—	—
2sg.	PA-aŋŋɛ		PA-ɛ		PA-ɛ	PR-siŋŋɛ
2du.	a-PA-ɛ		PA-ɛsɛ		PA-ɛsɛ	PR-nɛsɛ
2pl.	a-PA-innɛ		PA-ammɛ	PA-ams(imm)ɛ	PA-innɛ	PR-Nasinnɛ

Table 2 : Imperative paradigm

Nepali words which speakers pronounce essentially as they would in speaking Nepali are represented in italics in illustrative sentences and in a few expressions where they appear in headwords. Their transcription is simply transliterated Nepali orthography, except that the inherent vowel is not transcribed where it is not pronounced. No attempt is made to represent Limbu speakers' pronunciation of Nepali, which varies from speaker to speaker.

Other kinds of information are explicitly labeled. The following may occur before the definition:

also: variants (listed immediately after the headword).
see: reference to the main headword.
√ the morphophonemic verb root (in parentheses).
poss: a possessive form with the prefix **ku** 'his, her, its', supplied for (1) nouns which have syncopated forms after the possessive prefixes **a**, **kɛ**, and **ku**, and (2) kinship terms which have a prefixed nasal consonant after these prefixes (e.g. **ba** 'father', **ku-mba** 'his father').
pa: 3d person past form, listed only where the past stem differs from the morphophonemic root. (These past forms are regular, except when noted otherwise.)

After the definition:

Nep: Nepali equivalent. (Provided for a few words only.)
etym: Etymologically related Limbu entry. Many of the more obvious etymologies have not been noted.
cf Nep: Nepali etymology.
cf: Other Limbu words considered as relevant in some way.
fam: Families of verb roots of which the headword is a member. Members of word families may be related by

initial aspiration (unaspirated **p**, **t**, **k** vs aspirated **ph**, **th**, **kh**) or by differences in stem augment (zero, **-t**/**d** or **-s**) or both. An example of the first type is the pair of roots **paːks**/**phaːks** 'to come undone'/'to undo'. An example of the second type is the triplet **haːp/haːpt**/**haːps** 'to weep'/'to mourn for'/'to cause to weep'.

in: Other entries containing the listed word as an element. These lists are not always complete.

Parts of speech, form classes

The identification of part of speech is somewhat approximative in certain cases. The main concern is to identify major form classes and to clearly mark items that do not appear to occur as independent words. The terms and abbreviations used are the following:

adj. adjective.

adv. locative, temporal or manner adverb.

cmpd compound. Items marked "*(in cmpds)*" are considered not to occur as independent words.

contr. contracting, of certain verbs with open roots.

dem. demonstrative.

deriv. derivational, of prefixes and suffixes that form derived nouns, adjectives, etc.

imps. impersonal, of verbs that do not take a personal subject/agent.

interj. interjection.

interr./indef. interrogative/indefinite. Interrogative words can generally also be used as indefinites.

irr. irregular (of verbs).

n. noun.

num. numeral.

part. particle, of clitic elements that function on the level of information structure, or of rhetorical sentence particles.

pp. postposition. Many of these appear as subordinators with subordinate clauses.

pron. pronoun, including independent personal pronouns and possessive pronominal prefixes.

q. quantifier.

suffix	derivative and plural suffixes. Verbal agreeement suffixes are not listed in the dictionary.
v.	verb. The notation *v* is used in a few cases where the morphological class of the verb is not known.
vd	"deponent" verb of transitive form. Such verbs either never show agreement with persons (e.g. **taktu** 'it congealed'), or show only object-agreement with persons (e.g. **khiːktusi** 'it was bitter for them' or 'they experienced bitterness'). Many verbs of this type may occur with an impersonal instrument, marked by **rɛ**/**lɛ**, e.g. **kham-ɛllɛ nɛːktusi** 'they were smeared with earth', or 'earth was smeared on them'. Such verbs never have personal agents or personal agent-agreement.
vi	intransitive verb. The 3d person past form has the suffix **ɛ**, e.g. **phɛrɛ** 'he came (across)'.
vi (imps)	intransitive verb (including auxiliaries or modals like **tɛt** 'is possible') not showing personal agreement. Also indicates verbal expressions in which the verb appears to agree with an impersonal noun, as in **a-niŋwa ta** 'I am happy' [literally "my mind arrives"] rather than with the experiencer. A pronominal prefix to the noun (here **a** 'my') often indicates the experiencer.
vr	reflexive verb. Most transitive verbs may have reflexive forms. The notation *vr* indicates (1) verbs for which only reflexive forms were recorded or (2) reflexive forms with specialized meanings.
vs	stative intransitive verb. The participle has the form **PR-pa** rather than **kɛ-PR-pa** (e.g. **cuːkpa** 'small').
vt	transitive verb. The 3d person past form has the suffix **u**, e.g. **cogu** 'he made it'. Transitive verbs may agree with both "subject" and "object".

Previous dictionaries of Limbu

The following is a list of published Limbu dictionaries, in chronological order. The dictionaries of Chemjong, Subba, Yonghang, and Kainla cover literary as well as colloquial language.

Senior, H. W. R. 1908. *A Vocabulary of the Limbu Language.* [English-Limbu. Roman script. Reprint 1977, Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar.]
Chemjong, Iman Singh. 1965. *Limbu-Nepali-English Dictionary*. Kathmandu, Royal Nepal Academy. [Devanagari script.]
Subba, B. B. 1979. *Limbu Nepali English Dictionary*. Gangtok, Govt. of Sikkim, Directorate of Education. [Limbu and Devanagari scripts.]
Weidert, A., and B. Subba [D. Bikram Ingwaba]. 1985. *Concise Limbu Grammar and Dictionary*. Amsterdam, Lobster publications. [Limbu-English with English index. Roman/phonetic script. Panchthar dialect.]
Driem, George van. 1987. *A Grammar of Limbu*. Mouton de Gruyter. [Limbu-English, in roman/phonetic script. Phedap dialect.]
Yoṅhaṅ, Khel Rāj. 2052 B.S. [1995]. *Limbū Nepālī śabdakoś*. ?Lalitpur. [Limbu-Nepali, by semantic categories. Limbu script.]
Kainla, Bairagi [Til Bikram Nembang], ed. in press. Limbu-Nepali-English Dictionary. Kathmandu. Royal Nepal Academy.

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