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A Grammar of Bantawa : grammar, paradigm tables, glossary and texts of a Rai language of Eastern Nepal

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Citation

Doornenbal, M. A. (2009, November 3). *A Grammar of Bantawa : grammar, paradigm tables, glossary and texts of a Rai language of Eastern Nepal. LOT dissertation series*. LOT, Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics, Utrecht. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/14326>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Preface

From 2000 to 2006, I lived in Nepal. During those years, I became acquainted with some Bantawa Rai (Nepali *Rāī*) speakers and the language research community of Nepal. Ever since 2000, when I first learnt about the existence of Kiranti people, I have taken an interest in the complex and diverse Kiranti branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family. In early 2003, I came to know some Bantawa Rai speakers personally. When Mitra Rāī took me with him to his homeland in Sindrāñ, I became enthralled with the Bantawa Rai, their beautiful language, their heroic but slightly shrouded history, and their scattered homesteads, clinging to the steep and inaccessible valleys of the Kośī river complex.

In late 2005, I planned to spend another year in Nepal to devote to the study of the complexity of the Bantawa word. The Bantawa word, as will become clear in the course of this book, is potentially very complex. Within the boundaries of a syntactically simple and indivisible unit, the most intricate rules apply. On top of the information that I had collected earlier, I elicited more data and recorded some more stories in order to tackle the first step, i.e. a phonology. Any phonologist will know that in order to write a phonology and understand the interactions between the phonetic form and the ‘higher’ levels of grammar, one must have an idea of almost the entire grammar of a language.

In 2006, however, it became apparent that I would leave Nepal for a longer time. At that moment, I decided to hoard as many data as possible and see what I could make out of those data. The reader is reading the result of that effort.

Acknowledgements

This book could never have been written without the assistance and support of many people. In particular, thanks are due to Mitra, Bishwahang and my other Rai friends; You have been so kind and helpful. It is my wish that the world gets to learn more of your beautiful language and culture yet. Thanks to Prof. Dr. George van Driem, who contributed substantially to this thesis with his comments and corrections but did not see it through to the end. Thank you, Kwang-Ju Cho, Dan McCloy, Jeff Webster, the Watters family and all other expat linguists in Nepal that I met during the years that I lived there, for all the encouragement, ideas and hospitality. In a way, you saved me. Thank you, GZB, Harmelen, the Van Lindenberg family, for supporting me from or in the Netherlands. Thanks to the people of the Centre for Nepal and Asian

Studies (CNAS) and of the Tribhuvan University, particularly Prof. N.M. Tuladhar and Prof. N.K. Rai, for permitting me to do research in the affiliate program. I apologize for not completing my work in Nepal and hope this book makes up for it. To the people I met at the Linguistics faculty of Leiden University: professors, researchers, AIOs: thank you for your input and forming a great research community. To Jan Kwantes: for the computer; to Michael Guravage: for talking me into $\text{\LaTeX}$.

To my friends: thanks for being friends.

To Marieke, Jan, Kees, Wim and Luuk: thanks for everything.