7.00 THE VERBS IN KARBI

7.1 The verb system in Karbi is simple. A verb indicates the time of action by means of prefixes or suffixes added to the verb root. There are no irregular verbs in Karbi. In Karbi the same verb form is used in all tenses for all the persons both in singular and plural.

7.2 There are three principal tenses in Karbi verbs: present, past and future, which are further sub-divided into few classes as follows:

- **Present**: Indicative, present continuous, present perfect.
- **Past**: Immediate past, past conditional.
- **Future**: Future simple, future conditional.

Structurally a verb in Karbi appears as root + tense marker + suffix excepting the present indicative verb, where the verb root itself indicates the tense of it. The present indicative verb in Karbi has zero element for tense marker. Verbs in Karbi are inflected for tenses. The Karbi verb suffixes are noted below in the table No.9.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>1st person</th>
<th>2nd person</th>
<th>3rd person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) pr. ind.</td>
<td>zero element</td>
<td>zero element</td>
<td>zero element</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ne + li</td>
<td>ik(hon.)</td>
<td>ik(hon.)</td>
<td>ik(hon.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) pr. cont.</td>
<td>ke - lo</td>
<td>ke - lo</td>
<td>ke - lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bam - lo</td>
<td>bam - lo</td>
<td>bam - lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bam - lān</td>
<td>bam - lān</td>
<td>bam - lān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) pr. per.</td>
<td>ik et lo</td>
<td>ik et lo</td>
<td>ik et lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tān lo</td>
<td>tān lo</td>
<td>tān lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) simple pt.</td>
<td>lo</td>
<td>lo</td>
<td>lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) pt. cond.</td>
<td>āpat lo</td>
<td>āpat lo</td>
<td>āpat lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zi āpat lo</td>
<td>zi āpat lo</td>
<td>zi āpat lo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) simple ft.</td>
<td>zi</td>
<td>zi</td>
<td>zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) ft. cond.</td>
<td>zi(lately)</td>
<td>zi(lately)</td>
<td>zi(lately)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>po (soon)</td>
<td>po (soon)</td>
<td>po (soon)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table No. 9)

7.2.1 Present tense:

Indicative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neān co</th>
<th>'I eat rice'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ālān an co</td>
<td>'he eats rice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cāinañ bāp co</td>
<td>'the cow eats grass'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>netum ān co</td>
<td>'we eat rice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāñ ak co</td>
<td>'you eat fish'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meñ ak co</td>
<td>'the cat eats fish'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kāčañ an co</td>
<td>'Kachang eats rice'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hadāk methān do</td>
<td>'there is a dog'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Sometimes 'ik' is added after the verb with a pronoun in nominative ended with -li suffix. e.g.

neli lān zun ik  'I drink water'
nānli lān zun ik  'you drink water'
'alānli chāzun ik  'he drinks tea'

Present continuous -

ne ān ke co lo  'I am eating food'
ne ān cobam lān  'we are eating food'
ne wān bam lān  'I am still coming'
Ram dām hum bam lo  'Ram is going home'
chāhāb ātum dām ik bam lo  'the gentleman is going'
mantri cha ke zun ik lo  'the Minister is drinking tea'

Present perfect -

ne āncott lo  'I have eaten food'
nelitum ān co ik et lo  'we have eaten food'
nānli wān ik lān lo  'you have come'
lātum wān et lo  'they have come'

7.2.2 Past tense: past simple -

ne ān co lo  'I ate rice'
nelitum ān co lo  'we ate rice'
ālān hum et lo  'we went home'
Ram lādāk wān lo  'Ram came here'
Note: Sometimes the suffix 'la' is not used to a verb in the indefinite past to indicate the time. e.g.,

ātumā ālaān lādāk wān 'he came here yesterday'
ānut ichi hālādāk reco enut dā 'once upon a time there was a king'

Past conditional: The past conditional tenses are formed by adding 'āchante' and 'āpat la' to the verb root. Generally suffix po, zi are used with the verb before 'āpat la' e.g.,

neli dōhon dō āchante, bus pen dāmzi āpat la. 'if I had money, I would have gone by bus'.
ārwe zāni āchante, chak mechenzi āpat la. 'if it had rain, the paddy would have been good'.
nān dām āchante, nān la lān lōk āpat la. 'if you had gone, you would have got it'.
ne wāni āchante, nāntum chuńchezi āpat la. 'if I had come, you would have not suffered'.

7.2.3 Future: The future tenses are formed by putting 'zi' and 'po' to a verb root. The suffix indicates the action will begin now and will continue for some time in the future while suffix 'zi' indicates that the action will be commenced later on. e.g.,

ne hām dām zi 'I shall go home'
ālańlitum lādāk wānzi 'they will come here'
7.2.4 Imperative: The imperative is another important feature in Karbi verb. The imperative mood -tha, non, noi are suffixed to the verb root to indicate the imperative sense. Suffix non, tha, noi express the fact that the order is given to several persons. e.g.,

- nānli hādāk dāmthā  'you go there'
- nānli lādāk wāntha  'you come here'
- bāzi theñoi  'ring the bell'
- nānli wān pe prap noi  'you come quickly'
- ālānli pāwān thā  'allow him to come'

Note: The imperative follows the honorific marker ik. The other verbal suffixes thā/non/ noi etc. follow this ik in such situations. e.g.,

- nānli cha zun ik non  'you take your tea'
- nānli lun lun ik thā  'you sing a song'

In the imperative 3rd person singular and plural, the suffix pā, pe are inserted before the verb root. 'pe'
is used in positive sense while 'pa' and 'pe' are used in
the sense of prohibition. It follows the prohibitive 'ri',
e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ālāñli pedām non} & \quad \text{'let him go'} \\
\text{ālāñli pāpe dām ri non} & \quad \text{'let him not go'} \\
\text{hālātum pedām non} & \quad \text{'let them go'} \\
\text{hālālum pāpe dām ri non} & \quad \text{'let them not go'} \\
\text{hālātum pāpe dām nonne} & \quad \text{'they need not go'}
\end{align*}
\]

7.2.5 Causative: The causative verbs are formed in Karbi
by prefixing pa, pe, pi to the verb root. e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
pā- (i) & \quad \text{ārkak} \quad \text{'to sweep'} & \quad \text{pārkak} \quad \text{'cause to sweep'} \\
& \quad \text{ārklak} \quad \text{'to be boiled'} & \quad \text{pārklak} \quad \text{'cause to be boiled'} \\
& \quad \text{ārkli} \quad \text{'to worship'} & \quad \text{pārkli} \quad \text{'cause to worship'} \\
& \quad \text{ārcak} \quad \text{'to prop'} & \quad \text{pārcāk} \quad \text{'cause to prop'} \\
& \quad \text{ārbāk} \quad \text{'to embrace'} & \quad \text{pārbāk} \quad \text{'cause to embrace'} \\
(ii) & \quad \text{iṅkāi} \quad \text{'to fence'} & \quad \text{pāṅkāi} \quad \text{'cause to fence'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅchām} \quad \text{'to make cool'} & \quad \text{pāṅchām} \quad \text{'cause to make cool'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅchip} \quad \text{'to suck'} & \quad \text{pāṅchip} \quad \text{'cause to suck'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅchek} \quad \text{'to tear'} & \quad \text{pāṅchek} \quad \text{'cause to tear'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅzir} \quad \text{'to swim'} & \quad \text{pāṅzir} \quad \text{'cause to swim'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅziṅ} \quad \text{'to dissolve'} & \quad \text{pāṅziṅ} \quad \text{'cause to dissolve'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅzup} \quad \text{'to kiss'} & \quad \text{pāṅzup} \quad \text{'cause to kiss'} \\
& \quad \text{iṅtān} \quad \text{'to rebuke'} & \quad \text{pāṅtān} \quad \text{'cause to rebuke'}
\end{align*}
\]
Negation: The negation is another interesting feature in the Karbi language. The various methods of negative formation in Karbi are illustrated below:

While the verbs do 'have' and kālān 'is' indicate positive sense, āwe 'have not' and kāli 'is not' indicate negative sense. The negative forms are used to mean the negation. To indicate negative sense these 'āwe' and 'kāli' replace the verb 'do' and 'kālān' respectively. This is a very simple method of negative formation. e.g.

hadāk ak do  'there is fish'
hadāk ak āwe  'there is no fish'
Sometimes the word nanne 'no need' is used after the pronoun to indicate the sense of negation. e.g.

nephān nān \(\text{I want}'\)
nephān nānne \(\text{I do not want}'\)

Negative verb is also formed by repeating the initial single or double consonant of the verb at the end of it, after the -e suffix is used in such negative verb in Karbi. This is a peculiar negative verb in Karbi. e.g.

klem 'to do' klem-kl-e > klemkle \(\text{do not do}'\)
kur 'to make fire' kur-k-e > kurke \(\text{do not make fire}'\)
cō 'to eat' cō -c-e > cōce \(\text{do not eat}'\)
zun 'to drink' zun-z-e > zunze \(\text{do not drink}'\)
dām 'to go' dām-d-e > dāmde \(\text{do not go}'\)
wāni 'to come' wāni-w-e > wāniwe \(\text{do not come}'\)

ne dām \(\text{I go}'\)
ne dāmde \(\text{I do not go}'\)
ne dāmde det \(\text{I did not go}'\)
ne tumi klemklelo 'I worked yesterday'
ne tumi klemklelo 'I did not work yesterday'
ne pini wān pọ 'I will come today'
ne pini wānwepe 'I will not come today'
ne lān zun 'I drink water'
ne lān zunze 'I do not drink water'

Sometimes negative verb is also formed by repeating the medial consonant of the verb at the end of it and -e suffix is added to form a negative verb in Karbi. e.g.

ińchām 'to make cool' ińchām -ch-e> ińchāmche 'do not make cool'
ińchip 'to suck' ińchip-ch-e> ińchipche 'do not suck'
ińtuipik 'to high up' ińtuipik -p-e> ińtuipikpe 'to not high up'
ińzār 'to fly' ińzār-z-e> ińzānze 'do not fly'
ińzir 'to dissolve' ińzir-z-e> ińzirze 'do not dissolve'

lān ińchām 'water is cold'
lān ińchāmche 'water is not cold'
chāni ińzir 'lime is melted'
chāni ińzirze 'lime is not melted'
ińlań ińtuipik 'the hill is high'
ińlań ińtuipikpe 'the hill is not high'
If the verb root begins with a vowel then negative is simply formed by suffixing -e to the verb root. e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{i} & \quad \text{`to wear'} \quad \text{i-e} \quad \text{'do not wear'} \\
\text{e} & \quad \text{`to plant'} \quad \text{e-e} \quad \text{'do not plant'} \\
\text{et} & \quad \text{`to accept'} \quad \text{ete} \quad \text{'do not accept'} \\
\text{en} & \quad \text{`to make'} \quad \text{ene} \quad \text{'do not make'} \\
\text{ur} & \quad \text{`to dry on fire'} \quad \text{ure} \quad \text{'do not dry on fire'} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Another suffix -ri is used in Karbi to the verb root to indicate prohibition, another type of negation. e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{klem} & \quad \text{`to do'} \quad \text{klemri} \quad \text{'do not do'} \\
\text{zun} & \quad \text{`to drink'} \quad \text{zunri} \quad \text{'do not drink'} \\
\text{lañ} & \quad \text{`to find out'} \quad \text{lañri} \quad \text{'do not find out'} \\
\text{kām henño klemri} & \quad \text{`(you) do not do bad work'} \\
\text{hithi dāmik ri} & \quad \text{`(you) do not go to market'} \\
\text{wāñ we ri} & \quad \text{`(you) should not come always'} \\
\text{wāñri thā} & \quad \text{`(you) should not bring'} \\
\end{align*}
\]

7.2.7 Participle: Participles are also regular features in Karbi. The present participles are formed by prefixing ke-, kā-, ki- to the verb root. e.g.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{dām} & \quad \text{`to go'} \quad \text{ke dām} \quad \text{'going'} \\
\text{chiru} & \quad \text{`weep'} \quad \text{ke chiru} \quad \text{'weeping'} \\
\end{align*}
\]
The past participles are formed by suffixing -tān to the verb root. e.g.

dām tān  'gone'
kotāk tān  'written'
keklemtān ākām  'the work is done'
kechōk tān āpe  'the clothe is washed'

There is another type of participle, formed by suffixing 'chī' or 'rā' to the verb in the indicative mood or in the imperative mood. e.g.

ālañli ān chōchī dāmpā 'after taking rice, he will go'
neli ān chōchī dāmpā 'after taking rice, I will go'
ālañli ān pechōrā pedām nān 'let him go after taking rice'