ON DIACHRONIC ORIGINS OF CONVERBS IN MAITHILI

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Introduction
The verb (also termed ‘absolutive’, ‘pūrvakālika kriyā’, and ‘conjunctive participle’) is one of the characteristic devices for linking sequences of clauses to the host clause in Maithili.

The verb in Maithili is a linguistically valid category. It tends to share all the four main characteristics that are associated with verbs across the human languages of the world, i.e. nonfinite, verb form, adverbial, and subordination (Hasselmath 1995: 4). Maithili verb too does not have the degree of autonomy that is associated with the status of lexemes; clearly it is inflectional, and not derivational.

The verb in Modern Maithili is marked by the affix -kā/-ke (also by an allomorph -kē depending on idiolectal stylistic predilections and written variously in Devanāgarī as -ka>, <-ka>, <-kae>, <-kay>, and <-ke>) which is attached to a tenseless verb of a nonfinite clause in a sentence.

A preliminary description of the morphology of the Modern Maithili verb -kā> is reported in Yadav (2001) wherein it is described that -kā> is a non-neutral affix in that it tends to trigger changes in the shape of the verbal base to which it is attached. The purpose of the present paper is to present a historical linguistic survey of the diachronic origins of Maithili verbs in Old Maithili and Middle Maithili.

The sources of material for the purpose of the present analysis are listed below:

Old Maithili (circa 9th to 16th centuries)
1. Caryaṣāda (circa 800-1100) hymns of Siddha poets
2. Varna-Ratnākara (circa 1325) of Jyotirishvar (circa 1280-1340)
3. Kṛṣṇipatākā (early 15th century) of Vidyapati (circa 1360-1448)

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4. Kirtitala (circa 1406) of Vidyapati
5. Gorakshavijaya-nataka (early 15th century) of Vidyapati
6. Padavali (early 15th century) of Vidyapati

Middle Maithili (circa 17th to 18th centuries)
Middle Maithili Works from Mithila
7. Padavali/Bhajanavali (early 17th century) of Govindadasa
8. Parijataraṇaṇa-nāṭaka (early 17th century) of Umāpati
9. Rukmini-parinaya-nāṭaka (mid 18th century) of Ramāpati
10. Haribans/Kṛṣṇajanma (mid 18th century) of Manabodha

Middle Maithili Plays by Malla Kings from Nepal
11. Haragairirvivaha-nāṭaka (1629) of Jagajyotirmalla (1614-1637)
12. Hariścandrantrapya-nāṭaka (1651) of Siddhinarasimapamalla
13. Prabhavatiharaṇa-nāṭaka (1656) of Jagatprakāśamalla (1643-1672)
14. Pradyumnavijaya-nāṭaka (1666) of Jagatprakāśamalla
15. Parsurāmapākhyanā-nāṭaka (1713) of Bhūpatindaamalla (1696-1722)
16. Vidyāvilāpa-nāṭaka (1720) of Bhūpatindaamalla

It is hoped that this historical linguistic analysis will help trace the chronological growth of Maithili converses through a time span of around 1000 years; it may also help establish linkages with the contemporary usage of converses in Modern Maithili.

Old Maithili (circa 9th to 16th centuries)
The oldest specimens of the Maithili language are to be found in the Caryapada. There is a controversy with regard to the language of Caryapada being Old Bengali or Old Maithili. The controversy rages on to include Old Assamese, Old Oriya, and even Old Hindi. A number of eminent Bengali scholars and linguists (e.g. Hara Prasad Shastri 1916, Suniti Kumar Chatterji 1926, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi 1938, Md. Shahidullah 1940, Sukumar Sen 1948/65, Prabodh Chandra Bagchi & Shanti Bhikshu Shastri 1956) have edited, analyzed, and published the Caryapada as a work of Bengali. A Norwegian scholar, Per Kvaerne (1977), has also treated it as a work of Bengali and published its English edition in Oslo, Norway. Scholars of Maithili, on the other hand, have put forward linguistic evidence and claimed vigorously and unreservedly that the Caryapada hymns are written in some form of Old Maithili. Prominent among these are: Jayakanta Mishra (1949:
101-110), Subhadra Jha (1958:32-36) and Rajeshwar Jha (1968: 55-86). To quote Jayakanta Mishra:

...the language of the Caryāpada represents a Proto-Maithili dialect of the Chikā-Chikā area, midway between Standard Maithili and Standard Bengali, having some (esp. archaic) features in common with other Magadhan speeches (1949:110).

Caryāpada (circa 800-1100)
The verb in the Caryāpada is commonly expressed by an affixation of -i to the verb stem; use of allomorphically variant forms <-ia> and <-iā> is also found in the text. Examples cited below are from Per Kværne (1977) and song numbers and page numbers are given within brackets.

-i

duli duhi pīṭā dharāṇa na jāi
'having milked'

(2:77)

sahaje thira kari vāruṇī sāndhe
'having done/made'

(3:82)

jē ajarāmara hoi didha kāndhe
'having become'

(3:82)

sadguru bōhē bujhi re kāsu kāhini
'having understood'

(23:172)

uju re uju chāri mā lehu re bangka
'having abandoned'

(32: )

-ia

lūi bhanāi guru pucchia jāna
'having asked'

(1:67)

rāga deśa moha lāia chāra
'having smeared (the ashes of …)

(11:119)

pāpa punya bènī tiria sikala moḍia khambhāṭhāna
'having broken' 'having shattared'

(16:142)

chāḍia bhaya ghīṇa loācāra
'having abandoned (fear, repulsion and wordly conduct)'

(31:196)

-dašami duārata cihna dekhiā
'having seen'

(3:82)

āli kāli bēni sāri suniā (17:146)
'having heard'
dombi bibāhiā ahāriu jāma (19:155)
'having married'
dukhē sukhē eku kariā bhuṇjaī indiānī (34:208)
'making/having made'

It is worth noting here that the Modern Maithili converb -<ka> and its historical antecedents are totally unavailable in the Caryāpada.

Varna-Ratnākara (circa 1325)
The Varna-Ratnākara of Jyotirīśvara-kaviśekharācārya was composed in 1325 and it is preserved in a Manuscript copied in 1507. It happens to be the oldest extant Maithili prose text and it was published by Suniti Kumar Chatterji & Babua Misra (1940), and Anand Mishra & Govinda Jha (1980). The historical continuity of the converb -<i> of the Caryāpada is also evidenced in the Varna-Ratnākara. The examples given below are from Chatterji & Misra (1940) and the original pagination of the Manuscript is indicated within brackets.

-<i>
laï/laî (29a) 'carrying/having carried'

lipi (52b) 'having smeared the ground
(with clay, cow dung and water')

bhāi/bhāî (47a) 'having become/becoming'
eg je rājadeśe hakāri haluaha (44b, 'having invited'

In Varna-Ratnākara, too, the Modern Maithili converb -<ka> or its historical antecedents are unavailable.

Kīrttipatākā (early 15th century)
Vidyāpatī's (1350-1448) avahaṭṭha/apabhramśa work Kīrttipatākā was edited and published with a Modern Maithili translation by Umesh Mishra (1960a) and with Sanskrit and Hindi translations by Shashinatha Jha and Govind Jha (1992). In Kīrttipatākā, too, the converb is expressed by the affix -<i>. Examples given below are from Umesh Mishra (1960a) and the page numbers are provided within brackets.
suni vyavahāra subu(dhi)hī paṇḍja (7) ‘having heard’
sabakā ghara ube bāhā palaṭi jani jambia (7) ‘having turned’
parakkhi yāta sanginī (9) ‘having observed/noticed’
lajjalu ki paisi mātalā (11) ‘having penetrated’
kāhu aṅcara dhari khaṇca (11) ‘having held’

A couple of instances of -e affixation are also found in the text:
kāhu āsā due bāṅca (11) ‘giving/having given/offered’
kāhu rosa darasākā kutila bḥauha bhare bhanga (11) ‘having shown/exhibited’

It is worth noting that up until the Kīrttipatākā of Vidyāpati, the use of the Modern Maithili verb <−ka> or its historical antecedents <−kahū> or <−kahu> is not available.

Kīrttilatā (circa 1406)
Another avahaṭṭha/apabhramṣa work of Vidyāpati, Kīrttilatā, was edited and published by a number of scholars in Bengali (e.g. Hara Prasad Shastri 1924), Hindi (e.g. Baburam Saksena 1929, 1935; Vasudeva Sharan Agrawal 1962 and Shashinatha Jha 1997), and Maithili (e.g. Umesh Mishra 1960b; Ramanath Jha 1970b; and Govind Jha 1992).

Written in circa 1406, Vidyāpati’s prose-verse work Kīrttilatā contains numerous examples of -i affixation expressing the role of the verb. Examples cited below are from Govind Jha (1992) and page numbers are provided within brackets.
sāhasa sādhi (8) ‘having upheld’
pātisāhi ārādhi (8) ‘having worshipped’
pītrvaśra uddhāri (8) ‘having avenged’
maryādā cāḍi (18) ‘having abandoned’
mukhacandra kari adhogati dekhi (22) ‘having seen’
rāahni karo mukhāravinda dekhi (36) ‘having seen’
dhari caraṇatala appiā (38) ‘having held’
niña sāja upekhi (44) ‘having noticed/observed’
garua garua sūnda māri (48) ‘having killed/hit’
kumbhodbhava kare niyama peli (48) ‘having pushed/observed’
sattu karī kītikallolinī lāghī bhela pāra (50) ‘having crossed over’

Occasionally, the -ia of the Caryāpada is also used in the Kīrttilatā. Examples are from Baburam Saksena (1935/1965):

Chodḍiā ‘having abandoned’ (Saksena 1935/65: 70)
kariā ‘having done ’ (Saksena 1935/65: 70)

A few instances of -e affixation expressing the role of the converb are also evident in the Kīrttilatā:

dhāe ‘having run’ (Saksena 1935/65: 62)
dekhāe ‘having shown’ (Saksena 1935/65: 66)

What is curious is that the commonly used converb of Middle Maithili, <-kahū>, is also found in the Kīrttilatā. The affix <-kahū> may thus be termed as a precursor of the Middle Maithili converb <-kahu> or <-kahū>, and of the Modern Maithili <-ka> or <-kae>. As in Modern Maithili, the addition of <-kahū> to verb stems triggers alternation in verb stems in the avaḥaṭṭha/apabhraṃśa of Kīrttilatā as well.2

Examples:

sunī kahū (Saksena 1935/65: 98)
‘having heard’
dhāe kahū ( “  : 62)
‘having run’
thelli kahū ( “  : 100)
‘having pushed’
palaṭī kahū ( “  : 110)
‘having turned around’

Gorakṣavijaya-nāṭaka (early 15th century)
Vidyāpati’s Gorakṣavijaya-nāṭaka was edited and published (with the rather unclear and illegible photocopy of the original Manuscript written in the Tirhuta/Mithilākṣara script) by Umesh Mishra & Jayakanta Mishra (1961). This Sanskrit play contains songs in Maithili. The examples cited below are from these Maithili songs.
In Gorakṣavijaya-nātaka, too, the verb is expressed by the affixation of -i, e.g.

dharama rākhi dhana bharīa bhanḍāra (9)
‘keeping/having observed’
cārihū diśa buli dinḍima delā (10)
‘having walked around’
pānī paśāri visuddhaka geāna (14)
‘having washed/cleaned’
bhanai Vidyāpati anubhava jāni (19)
‘having known/experienced’

On one occasion, -ia-is also used:
bhanahi Vidyāpati jolaī hātha (23)
‘having joined (the palms) together’

Padāvalī (early 15th century)
Vidyāpati’s mellifluous songs, popularly known as Padāvalī, were edited, translated, and published by a number of scholars in: Bengali (e.g. Sharadacharān Mitra Bangabda 1285/A.D.1878, Nagendranath Gupta Bangabda 1316/A.D.1909, and Khagendranath Mitra and Biman Bihari Mazumdar1952), Hindi (e.g. Nagendranath Gupta 1910 and Shashinath Jha 1961, 1967, 1979), English (e.g. G. A. Grierson 1882a), and Maithili (e.g. Shivanandan Thakur 1941; Subhadra Jha 1954; Ramanath Jha 1970a; Umanath Jha 1972; Surendra Jha ‘Suman’ & Ramdeo Jha 1977; Vidyapati Thakur 1979; Govind Jha 1981; and Ramdeo Jha & Mohan Bharadwaj 1999). Of these, I have access mostly to English and Maithili editions of Vidyāpati’s Padāvalī. The examples cited below are from Shivanandan Thakur (1941) and Vidyapati Thakur 1979, with the song number and the page number provided within brackets.

In Padāvalī, too, the verb is most commonly expressed by the affixation of -i, e.g.

Palaṭa niśā nirasa nihāri, kahabahū kaona hoiti ī gāri (21,355)
‘having seen’
cāpi cibukā he adhara madhu pibe, kaṇone jānala hameu dharaba jībe (23,356)
‘having pressed hard’
ghengala badhí pātorā dhaelaha aisani tua paripāṭī (24,356)
‘having tied up/knotted’
ketaki kusuma āni viraci vividha bāni caūdisa sājala sālā (30,363)
‘bringing/having brought’ ‘having created’
tua guṇa kahi kahi murajhi palae mahi, rayani gamābae jāgī (76,403)
‘having told/described’ ‘having fainted’ ‘having awakened’

A couple of instances of -e <-e, -ya> affixation are also found in the text:

dūṭī bhae janu janamae nāri, binu bhelē bhelihi goāri (20,354)
‘having become’
gṛha madhu dudha daya, netē bāṭī kae caūdisā delaka dīpamālā (30,363)
‘having offered’ ‘having lighted a lamp’

Thakur’s Padāvalī also contains one instance of -kahū and six instances of -kae (a reminiscent of Modern Maithili -kae):

-kahū
sisirē mahipati dāpē cāpikahū rājā bhela vasanta (17,351)
‘having pressed hard’
-kae
manamathatanta antadhari padhikae avasarē bheli siānī (17,351)
‘having read’
tanhiparasi virahaka sosā, tañe didhakae kaūtāva posa (18,352)
‘having made firmer’
gṛha madhu dudha daya, netē bāṭī kae caūdisā delaka dīpamālā (30,363)
‘having offered’ ‘having lighted a lamp’
se jāṇi daīve ānikae niramala kāmini anta na bhāra/vē (65,392)
‘having learnt’ ‘having brought’
aisani kae paribodhi paṭhaihaha (74,401)
‘having allured/convinced’
bhala kae hari heri na bhelē tāda lāgalā bhora (81,409)
‘in a good manner’

To conclude thus far, in Old Maithili the converb was mainly morphological, i.e. suffixal. In other words, the suffixes -i/-ia and -e were attached to consonant-ending and vowel-ending tenseless verb stems, respectively, of a nonfinite subordinate clause of a matrix clause. Use of a
separate and distinct word-like particle or affix was virtually nonexistent in Old Maithili -- although scant uses of such word-like affixes (i.e. -kahū and -kae) accompanied with concomitant verb stem alternations are traced in Vidyāpati’s Kirtitālī and Padāvalī.

Middle Maithili (circa 17th to 18th centuries)

Middle Maithili Works from Mithilā

Padāvalī/Gitāvalī/Bhajanāvalī (early 17th century)

Govindadāsa’s songs, variously entitled as Padāvalī/Gitāvalī/Bhajanāvalī, were edited and published by a number of native scholars of Maithili: Mathura Prasad Dixit 1932, S.K. Jha 1933, Amaranatha Jha 1942, and Govind Jha 1982. The examples cited below are from Govind Jha 1982 and song numbers are provided within brackets.

In Govindadāsa’s songs, too, the converb is most commonly expressed by the affixation of –i:

benuka phūka dhūka madanānala kula indhanahi pajāri  (5)
‘having added fire’
sarabasa lae palaṭali puna bīndhala ṅāmgini baṅka nihāri (20)
‘having taken away’ ‘having gazed’
sahacara meli calali jaba sundari kālindī karae sanāna (21)
‘having gathered/accompanied’
bhītaka cīta bhujaga heri je dhani camaki-camaki ghana kāpa (41)
‘having seen’ ‘having been astonished’
bidadadhī mādhava anubhava jāni… (59)
‘having learnt/experienced’
jari jari tatahi bhasama sa(m)ghāta (98)
‘having been burnt (into ashes)’
eta kahi sundari dīgha nisāsahī murchiti harala geāna (105)
‘having said/uttered’
sundari rādhā ābae bāni (112)
‘having become/adorned as’
se rasa sunī nāgara vara nārī (120)
‘listening to’
A few instances of -e affixation are also evident in the text:

\[ bala kae \] kharatara nakhara sīkharā sañō motima banahi bithāra
\[ \text{‘having added extra energy/force’} \] (13)

\[ adhara sudhā dae \] punahi jiābae punu niramada kae teja
\[ \text{‘having offered the ambrosia of lips’} \] (13)
\[ \text{‘having made impotent’} \]

\[ kara kamkana pana kae \] sukhabandhana sikhae bhujaga-guru pāse
\[ \text{‘taking an oath’} \] (40)

\[ sīthi banāe ādihaha punu kacarī \]
\[ \text{‘having parted the hair’} \] (65)

\[ dhāe dhaela giridhāraka vasane \]
\[ \text{‘having run’} \] (74)

\textbf{Pārijātaharana-nāṭaka (early 17th century)}

The \textit{Pārijātaharana-nāṭaka} of Umāpati Upādhyāya is a Sanskrit-Prakrit play but it contains a total of 20 Maithili songs. This play was edited, translated, and published by Grierson 1917, Chetanatha Jha 1959, and Mishra et al 1984. The examples cited below are from Grierson 1917 and song and page numbers are provided within brackets.

In \textit{Pārijātaharana-nāṭaka}, the converb is expressed exclusively through the affixation of -i

\[ kara jori \] rukumini kṛṣṇa saṁga vasanta-raṁga nihāraḥī
\[ \text{‘with folded hands’} \] (7,30)

\[ kāhi bhajaba teji tāhi \]
\[ \text{‘having abandoned’} \] (10,32)

\[ sabha pariteji hari mohi phula delā \]
\[ \text{‘having abandoned’} \] (16,37)

\[ jaladhara-jāla jāni hia hārī \]
\[ \text{‘having learnt about’} \] (18,40)

\[ katana jatana dhari jaũ paripālia sāpa na mānaya pose \]
\[ \text{‘having held (with utmost care)’} \] (20,42)

\[ īṭāmaḥi ṭhora ṭhoki binatā-suta bhāngala diggaja dantā \]
\[ \text{‘having hit hard’} \] (37,53)

\[ guna bujhi bhūpa karia sanamāne \]
\[ \text{‘having realized’} \] (42,58)
Rukmiṇīparinaya-nāṭaka (mid 18th century)

The Rukmiṇīparinaya-nāṭaka of Ramāpati Upādhyaśaya was edited and published by Jayakanta Mishra 1961/1368 sāla. In this play, too, the converb is commonly expressed by the affixation of -i and -e. The examples cited below are from J. Mishra 1961, with page numbers provided within brackets.

-i
khaṇḍaparaśu tāṇḍava dekhi harāṣita (22)
‘seeing/having seen’
rāja-kāja teji (20)
‘having quit’
c kī sehe suni puna puna murechu dusaha gun (78)
‘having heard/learnt’ ‘having realized’
puruba kaluṣācaya jāni (82)
‘having known/learnt’
kahia vicārī bidukhi sakhi abahu purata mora kāma (82)
‘having considered’
sehao kāti pune hasi jadurāe (95)
‘having cut’ ‘having smiled’
-e
bhūpati nikaṭa bheli gae ṭhāḍhi (18)
‘having gone’
lae sakhijana tasu calae samipe (87)
‘having gathered/accompanied’
lae gela govinda garuḍa caḍhāya (93)
‘having caused to mount’

It is worth noting that a couple of instances of Modern Maithili converb - kae are also evident in the text of this play:

girijā sahita sakala agha duri kae (3)
‘having removed’
katae jāha mādhava kae cori (94)
‘having stolen/abducted’

Haribans/Kṛṣṇajanma (mid 19th century)

Manabodh’s Haribans (Skt. haribamśa) is one of the most oft-quoted works of Middle Maithili. It was first edited and translated into English by George

In Haribans, too, conversbs are expressed by the affixation of –i in consonant-ending verb stems and –e in vowel-ending verb stems in general. The examples cited below are from Grierson 1882b and page numbers are provided within brackets.

-\( i \)
\[ \begin{align*}
\bar{i} \text{ suni} & \text{ sabhaka judāela kāna} \\
& \text{‘having heard/learnt’} \\
\text{aṅcala} & \text{ jhāpi bhavana laī geli} \\
& \text{‘having covered/covering’} \\
\text{ānana} & \text{ cumbi payodhara dhaiḷa} \\
& \text{‘kissing /having kissed’}
\end{align*} \] (132) (135) (135)

-\( e \)
\[ \begin{align*}
\text{kaṃśa} & \text{ āe tohē leta uṭhāe} \\
& \text{‘having come’} \\
\text{āsikha daī hari hridae lagaūla} & \text{‘having blessed’} \\
\text{hama bharījanma sudini bhaiṇi rahaba} & \text{‘having become’}
\end{align*} \] (132) (134) (143)

After Vidyāpati’s avahattha/apabhramṣa work, Kīrttilatā, Manabodha’s Haribans is the first Middle Maithili work in which conversbs of k-forms are attested, e.g.

-\( kahu \)
\[ \begin{align*}
\text{gai kahu} & \text{ gāma gohāri lagāola} \\
& \text{‘having gone’} \\
\text{dhaī kahu} & \text{ tāraka jhatahā kaīla} \\
& \text{‘having held’} \\
\text{bicahi jhapaṭi kahu} & \text{ haladhara dhaiḷa} \\
& \text{‘having suddenly attacked’}
\end{align*} \] (137) (138) (147)
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-kahū
jiti kahū majhilahi phani bhela ṭhadha
‘having conquered’
(137)
cadhī kahū ābathi hārathi pheri
‘having climbed’
(150)
-kae/<-kai>
sarasara kai ghara paīsali dhāya
‘hurriedly’
(134)

Middle Maithili Plays by Malla Kings of Nepal

Haragaūrīvivāha-nātaka (1629)
Jagajjyotirmalla reigned as king of Bhaktapur from 1614 to 1637. His play Haragaūrīvivāha-nātaka was composed in N.S. 749, i.e. A.D. 1629. This play was edited and published by Ramdeo Jha 1970. The examples of converbs cited below are from Ramdeo Jha 1970/1988 and page numbers are provided within brackets.

-i
vihusi vihusi muni mukha sabe hera
‘having smiled /smilingly’
(45)
manamatha mārī nārī ālimga
‘having killed/suppressed’
(47)
śaśi uthi calala akāśe
‘having arisen’
(61)

-e
bhasama āga dae ... ‘having applied’
(34)
he pārvvatī mahādeva manoduṣkhe baīsal chathi gae manābara
‘having gone’
(59)
Hariścandranṛtyam-nātaka
(1651)
Siddhinarasimhamalla’s play Hariścandraṃṭyaṃ-nāṭaka was composed in N.S. 771, i.e. A.D. 1651. This play was edited and published with a German introduction by August Conradi in 1891.

Originally written as a habilitationsschrift submitted to Leipzig University on November 23, 1891, the work was entitled as Das Hariścandraṃṭyaṃ: Ein Almepalesisches Tanzspiel.

This play is a Bangla-Maithili (more Bangla) mixed play. Consequently, only a few uses of Maithili converbs are evidenced in this play.


tuva mukha heri (25)
‘having seen’

rāya rāni kare jori (32)
‘having joined palms together’

rājā kīni harara cāṇḍāre (34)
‘having bought off’

-kahu

nirantarā duṣṭakā samge prīti karikahu … (16)
‘having been in association with’

rājā hariścandrákā satya dekhikahu paramānanda bhaï gera (39)
‘having witnessed’

ahe pāpiśṭha, bhara kayakahu baïs (42)
‘having relied/having become certain’

Prabhāvattharaṇa-nāṭaka (1656)

Jagatprakāśamalla reigned as king of Bhaktapur from 1643 to 1672. His play Prabhāvattharaṇa-nāṭaka was composed in N.S. 776, i.e. A.D. 1656. This play was edited and published by Lekhanath Mishra in 1972. In this play, converbs are expressed most generally by an affixation of -i and -kae. One instance of -kahu is also evidenced in it.

The examples cited below are from Lekhanath Mishra 1972 and page numbers are provided within brackets – although we are told by Brinkhaus 1987 that Mr. Mishra has erred copiously in his transliteration from the Newari script into the Devanagari script.
-i
sehe dekhi mora upajala ānanda ‘having seen’ (8)
vihusi karaha hama sañe sadabhāva ‘smilingly’ (8)
sira mukuṭa dhari paraveśa dela ‘having held/worn’ (9)
he haṃṣī ! ihāka kathā sunī viraha jvāla bhela ‘having learnt/heard’ (22)
śatru māri devatā sabaka sānanda karu ‘having killed’ (62)
-e/<-ya>
he priya loke! antapura jāya rahu ‘having gone’ (19)
... hame vana gaya samidha ānaya jāichi ‘having gone’ (34)
he īsvara ! apana putra pathāe, vajranābha māri devakāja karu ‘having sent’ ‘having killed’ (29)
-kae/<-kaya>
he haṃṣī ! bāpe hama antahpura avaruddhi kaya lākhala chiahu... ‘having obstructed’ (22)
....ṣṛṅgāra bhāve mohi kaya ānaba ‘having charmed’ (34)

-kahu
katane jatane haṃṣī pathāe kahu ekara jīva karaba dūre ‘having sent’ (11)

Pradyumnavijaya-nāṭaka (1666)
Written in N.S. 786, i.e. May-June 1666 A.D., to be performed on the occasion of his second son Ugramalla's tonsure ceremony, Jagatprakāśamalla's play Pradyumnavijaya-nāṭaka was edited and published in Germany by Horst Brinkhaus (1987, Appendix 1, pp. 161-345) with a Roman transliteration and an English translation.

This play may be viewed as a prototype of a Middle Maithili play in that k-forms of converbs abound in it. A total of 18 occurrences of -kahu are evidenced in the text, while -i, -e and -kae occur only four to five times. A few examples are given below.
-i
nāradaka bacana māṇi
‘having acquiesced’
(jathara phāri)
‘having torn’
-e
eka bhaya
‘having come together/united’
galahathā dae khedu
‘having pushed (the neck) by hand’
-kae
takhane iñāña pradyumnaka rūpa kae …
‘having looked like/acted as Pradyumna’
bāgamatī bāndhana kae
‘having tied/boustructed the river Bagmati’
-kaḥu
jāe kahun
‘having gone’
dekhi kahun
‘having seen’
jala snāna kaya kahun
‘having bathed’
ḫāyi marabāe kahun
‘having got killed’
paṭhāe kahun
‘having sent’
kōṭi kahun
‘having killed’

Parsurāmopākhyāna-nāṭaka (1713)
Bhūpatindramalla was born on November 18, 1674. He was crowned as the king of Bhaktapur at the age of 22 in 1696. After a rule of 26 years, Bhūpatindramalla died young at the age of 48 in 1722.

Written in N.S. 833, i.e. A.D. 1713, to be performed on the occasion of the tonsure ceremony of the crown prince, Bhūpatindramalla’s play Parsurāmopākhyāna-nāṭaka is as yet unpublished. Research leading to publish a critical edition of the Manuscript of the play containing original Newari text, Devanagari and Roman transliterations, English translation, a
Middle Maithili skeleton-grammar, critical commentary on Medieval dramaturgy, and index is ongoing (R. Yadav, in preparation). For a preliminary enquiry into this play, the reader is referred to R. Yadav and R. Jha 1982 and R. Yadav 1990.

Copious instances of –i, -e, and –kae converal affixations are available in the Manuscript of this play; only one instance of –kahu is available in it. A few examples are provided below.

-i
kanaka kamala sama kuca juga dekhi
‘seeing/having seen’
(Folio 7b)
vidhumukhi vihusi vilokaha thora
‘smilingly’
(Folio 46b)
sahasrārjuna rājā, āśrama niṣṭā āe, munirājake māri, kāmadhenu
‘coming (near)’
‘killing’
(Folio 58b)

-e/<-ya>
suvadani sunu mana daya mora bāni
‘attentively’
(Folio 7b)
tahnikā puspamālā pahirāe, pranāma karu
‘garlanding’
(Folio 16a)
jakhane renukā devīka, vivāha bhela, indra āe, jaūtuka, delahni
‘having come/arrived’
(Folio 37b)
rājā sakrobha bhaya, hinkāke, khadga prahāre,
‘angrily’
(Folio 54b-55a)
ī avasthā daya kāmadhenu hari laya gela
‘rendering (him) to such a pitiable condition’

-kae
nagaraloka bavatura kae, ānu
‘gathering/collecting together’
(Folio 14b)
vicitra vastrālaṅkāra pahi(ri) kae
‘wearing’
(Folio 15a)
he purohitā rājakumārī prasāhani kae ānali
‘having decorated/bedecked’
(Folio 19b)

ihāṇa, snāna kae, citā pradaksīnā kaya agni praveśa karu
‘having bathed’ ‘having circled around’
(Folio 57a)
-kahu

... î pāpiṣṭha rājā mrgayāvyāje āe kahu ...

'having come'

Vidyāvilāpa-nāṭaka (1720)

Written in N.S. 840, i.e. A.D. 1720, Bhūpaṇīdramalla's play Vidyāvilāpa-nāṭaka was edited by Nanigopala Vandopādhya 1916-17 and Jayakanta Mishra 1965. Copious instances of –i and –e affixes of converses are available in the text, while a mere three occurrences of the k-form verb –kahu are available in the text. The examples cited below are from Jayakanta Mishra 1965 and page numbers are provided within brackets.

-i

apana nagara rahi karaba samāja

'staying/living'

harāṣīta hoya tihi paricaya jāni

'having learnt'

se bujhi tinu mili karaba jatane

'having learnt/understood' 'having united'

-e/-ya>

parakāta bhaya hame purāoba kāme

'having appeared (in human form)'

peṭa bharaba duhu vanacara khāya

'having devoured/eaten'

-kahu

pāga bāṇḍhi kahu dhaya taravāre

'having tied (the turban)'

pāna (pothi) laya kahu

vividh racita phala laya kahu āja

'having taken'

Conclusion

Based on the discussion presented above, the following conclusions may suggest themselves.

A. In Old Maithili, the converbal affix was invariably –i (or, its allomorphic variants –i/i/i/i). Occasional use of the converbal affix –e in vowel-ending verb stems may be viewed as a linguistic innovation of this period in the historical growth of the Maithili language.
B. It is a historical coincidence that in the formation of compound verbs in Modern Maithili, the very same 
- i and - e affixes are used. In other words, the 
- i and - e affixes are isomorphic (for more information, see Yadav 1996). Examples:

1. < o  khā-∅ /khā-e > le-l-athī > Complex Predicate
   he-hon  eat  take-PST-3 hon
   ‘He ate’

2. < o  khā-∅-ka /khā-e-ka > le-l-athī > Converbal Construction
   he-hon  eat-CONV  take-PST-3 hon
   ‘He took (it) after having eaten’

3. < o  cal-i > ge-l-āha > Complex Predicate
   he-hon  walk  go-PST-3 hon
   ‘He went away.’

4. < o  cal-i -ka > ge-l-āha Converbal Construction
   he-hon  walk-CONV  go-PST-3 hon
   ‘He went walkingly/ He went on foot.’

C. In Middle Maithili, along with - i and - e suffixes, converbs were
dominantly represented by such k-form affixes as -kahū, - kahu, and -
kae; these were later transformed into - ka, - kae, and - kū in Modern
Maithili. Examples:

5  dekh-i kahu ‘having seen’  (Brinkhaus ed. 1987: 198)
6.  mār-i kahū ‘having killed’  (Grierson ed. 1882b: 135)
7.  moh-i kae ānaba ‘having charmed’  (L. Mishra ed. 1972: 34)
8.  bāgamati bamdhana kae ‘having obstructed the river Bagmati’
    (Brinkhaus ed. 1987: 260)
9.  calū, re bhāgina, ghur-i ke ghara ‘returning’  (Grierson ed. 1885: 639)

D. In an influential article published in Germany, Grierson ed. 1885: 635
made a highly insightful observation:

Conjunctive Participle. Formed by adding के to the 1st verbal noun. Thus
देखके, देखके, पायके etc... The word के commonly called the conj. part. of कर is
in reality no such thing. It is derived independently from the Vaidik कर (Skr. कृत), hence Pr. करिः (Hem Cha.IV, 271) and Bihari (with elision of
र) के. Hence देखके, means ‘having done the action of seeing.’
It is thus clear that the Modern Maithili verb –ka/ke is not derived from the verb stem kar- (infinitive karaba) ‘to do’. As a matter of fact, diachronically, the verb <-ka> and the contracted form <ka-> of the action verb <kar-> ‘do’ are totally unrelated.

E. The Modern Maithili verb –ka is quite akin to the Middle Maithili verb –kahū/-kahu; in all likelihood, -kahū/-kahu may be viewed as the logical historical antecedent of the Modern Maithili verb –ka or –ke.

F. If the date of composition of Vidyāpati’s Kṛttilatā is truly A.D. 1406 as claimed by Ramanath Jha 1972:26, then it can be safely asserted that the first attested use of the k-form verb, i.e. –kahū/-kahu, in Maithili was made in 1406.

G. As the k-form of the verb is totally unavailable in Vidyāpati’s Kṛttipatākā, it may be surmised that Kṛttipatākā was indeed written earlier than Kṛttilatā, and that in all probability Kṛttilatā is not the first work of Vidyāpati as is commonly believed.

H. During the diachronic development of Maithili, a curious historical fact is observed. It is noticed that the morphs used as converbal affixes in Old Maithili are used as phonological changes during stem alternations upon addition of k-forms of verbs in Middle and Modern Maithili non-finite verb stems. Needless to say that the phonological rules remain the same, i.e. –i and –e are inserted in consonant-ending and vowel-ending verb stems, respectively (for more details, see Yadav 2001). Examples:

Old Maithili (circa 9th to 16th centuries)
10. duh-i ‘having milked’ (Kvaerne ed. 1977: 66)
11. lāgh-i ‘having crossed over’ (Govind Jha ed. 1992: 50)

Middle Maithili (circa 17th to 18th centuries)
12. dekh-i kahu ‘having seen’ (Brinkhaus ed. 1987: 198)
13. caďh-i kahū ‘having climbed’ (Grierson ed. 1882b: 150)
14. le-ya kahu ‘having taken’ (J. Mishra ed. 1965: 17)
15. pathā-e kahu ‘having sent’ (L. Mishra ed. 1972: 11)

Modern Maithili (19th to 21st centuries)
16. pib-i ke⁴ ‘having drunk’ (Grierson ed. 1885: 640)
17. kṣarap-i ke ‘having jumped’ (Grierson ed. 1885: 651)
18. l-e ke ‘having taken’ (Grierson ed. 1885: 636)
19. o hās-i-ka bjalāhā 'he spoke smilingly'
20. āi-kālhi adhikatara peṭa cīr-i-ka baccā paiddā kaela jāita achi 'These
days, most children are born by caesarian operation'
21. o dabāi khā-(e)-ka nīka bhelāhā 'He recuperated after taking medicine'
22. kitāba da-(e)-ka jāe eva 'Please go after having given (back) the book
(to me).'

I. The present historical linguistic analysis of Maithili verbs may offer
fresh linguistic evidence for as well as incisive insights into the acts of
division of the Maithili language and literature into such periods as Old,
Middle, and Modern Maithili. Needless to say, the current practice of
using such labels as Old Maithili, Middle Maithili, and Modern Maithili is
at its best tentative and speculative.

J. Finally, one further benefit that may accrue from the present historical
linguistic analysis of Maithili verbs is that linguists of any persuasion
may fruitfully utilize the Maithili data to carry out a pan-Indo-Aryan
typological study of verbs in Indo-Aryan languages.

Notes
1. It deserves to be noted that verbs in -i and -iā are not unique to
Maithili. Verbs in -i are also a feature of regional Bengali and
underlie the Sādhu Bhāṣā Bengali forms. Remnant of the older verb
form -i is also evidenced in Nepali, e.g.
phūlcokt-bāta ek lākh phūl-harū lyā-t
phūlcokt-ABL 100,000 flower-P bring-SEQ[CONV]
   jyoti-lāt carh-ā-t...
light-OBJ proceed-CAUS-SEQ[CONV]
'Bringing 100,000 flowers from Phūlcokt and offering them up to the
light...(Peterson 2002, 105-106)

Converbal forms in -iā are a standard feature of Sādhu Bhāṣā Bengali and
also occur in written texts of most conservative and respected writers,
such as Bankim Chandra Chatterji and R. Tagore, as quoted in Klaiman
(1983:141):

ghare brisṭi prabes kariyaa jal bosiyaache
room-L rain entrance  do-CP water has-sat
"The rain having come into the room, water accumulated' (Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Racanābalī v. 2, Calcutta 1954:60)

raannaagbarer paase praacir bhaangiyaa katokgulo
kitchen-G beside wall break-up some
ī jaro haiya aache
brick piled-up become-CP are
'Beside the kitchen, a wall having broken, some bricks are piled up' (R. Tagore, Galpaguccha. Calcutta 1954:165)

2. k- forms of conversbs are also evidenced marginally in Nepali and extensively in Hindi-Urdu, e.g.
Nepali: ma khā-ī-kana ga-ē
I eat-CONV go-PST-1
'I went after eating' [lit: 'I went after having eaten']
Hindi-Urdu: use naahaa kar khaanaa naahī khaayah (Kachru 1981:42)
he ag bathe CP meal not ate
'He didn't eat his meal after bathing'

3. -e form conversbs in consonant final verb stems (and -ye form conversbs in vowel final verb forms) are also a dominant characteristic of Modern Bengali, e.g.
se baari giye kaapor chere caan korio
he house go-CP clothes leave-CP bath did
'he went home, took off his clothes, and had a bath'
osudh kheyey Jodur phal holo
medicine eat-CP Jodu-G benefit became
'Jodu was benefited by taking medicine'
lu lege se maaraa gaelo
heatstroke affect-CP he died
'He got heatstroke and died' (Klaiman 1983:138)

4. Variants of k-forms of conversbs realized as -ke are also evidenced in regional Hindi, e.g.
daurke jāo varnā nārāz hūgā
'Go quickly [lit: 'run and go'] or I will be annoyed' (Alice Davison 1986:2, as quoted in Masica 1991:399)
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