Some Interrogative Particles in Prākrit

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Interrogative particles, such as words meaning 'why' are not subject to many of the semantic influences that bring about the loss of words, and yet such particles are very liable to change. They are constantly overshadowed by the interrogative pronoun and may often be replaced by more specific and intense expressions such as 'for what reason'. Such expressions are generally emphatic and may even border on slang, as for instance English 'why on earth?' and 'whatever for?' and they are therefore particularly prone to change with linguistic fashions and even with the taste of individual authors. This can be illustrated from Middle Indo-Aryan.

In Sanskrit the sense of 'why?' was conveyed usually by kasmāt, the ablative singular of the interrogative pronoun; a reason was asked for more specifically by kena kāranena 'for what reason?'. A rather more vague inquiry for a cause could be introduced by the neuter of the interrogative pronoun, kim, which was often strengthened by the addition of the particles u, nu, khalu etc. Of these expressions kismāt has survived occasionally as kamhā, the ablative singular of the interrogative pronoun in Prākrit, but it was no longer generally used in the sense of 'why?'. In the Śvetāmbara Jain canon the other two expressions of Sanskrit, kena kāraṇena and kim maintain their popularity, but they are often used in fixed locutions peculiar to the
canon. The most striking of these locutions is the use of the slightly emphatic and adversative particle se to introduce a question. This particle has been derived by Pischel\(^1\) from Vedic sed, sa+id. This derivation no longer seems tenable on account of the Pāli evidence, as given for instance by M. Mayrhofer\(^2\), and from the evidence of Middle Indo-Aryan in general: the distribution of the particle se shows it to be quite clearly a Māgadhī form of the neuter singular of the pronoun sa and equivalent to the form tam< tad of the other Middle Indo-Aryan languages. Alsdorf\(^3\) has shown that the particle se was used in the Dhauli and Jaugraṇa versions of Aśoka’s edicts in a slightly adversative sense and it appears to have been characteristic of the extreme eastern parts of India. Examples from the canon are for instance: se keṇattheṇāṁ, Goyamā, maṇussā tivihā pannaṁ—‘why then, Gautama, are human beings considered to be of three kinds?’ (Bhagaṇa I.2); se keṇattheṇāṁ bhante evam vucaṁ—‘why then, Sir, is it said that…?’ (Bhagaṇa I.1). In the first of these examples, perhaps even more than in the second, it is quite clear that se has developed the function of a particle and is no longer simply the neuter form of the pronoun. The introductory se is also frequent in other kinds of interrogative clauses, as in the very usual phrase se kiṁ tam ‘then what is…?’, e.g., se kiṁ tam neraṁyā—‘what then are the creatures of hell?’ (Paṇṇavaṇṇasuttaṁ I). This kind of construction is found in the earlier as well as the later portions of the canon, and occurs for instance in a really old text like the Sūyagaṇaṅga (II.1): se kiṁ aṅga puṇa vayaṁ…muccāmo—‘why then, are we confused?’ The use of the particle se to introduce a question appears to be characteristic of the Ardhamāgadhī and to a lesser extent the Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī of the Svetāmbara Jaina canon, and does not seem to have survived in post-canonical literature, though there are a few instances of the use of se in various other constructions in the later texts. This may be partially due to the regional restrictions of the use of se and partially to the fact that it was a weak particle without any very distinctive meaning. It does reappear occasionally in the less stereotyped Māhārāṣṭrī texts, as for instance in the Līlāvaiṅkāhā, but only as a meaningless adjunct to any kind of phrase. It has been weakened to si in Māhārāṣṭrī, just as the particle je was

\(^1\) R. Pischel, Grammatik der Prākritsprachen, Strassburg 1900, p. 299.
weakened to ji, though in the case of je this change occurred at a somewhat later date and figures mainly in Apabhraṃśa. The weak particle si was only rarely associated with interrogative locutions at this stage, e.g. Lilāvaihāka v. 708: kātiha puṇo taṃ si diśahasi—‘where indeed will you be seen again?’ Professor A. N. Upadhye in his edition has naturally recognised si as a particle here, but the unknown Jaina author of the vṛtti has failed to do so, and this in itself may be taken as an indication of the rarity of se > si in the later texts. The interrogative introduced by se must therefore be considered as a characteristic of the style of the Śvetāmbara Jaina canon.

Another striking feature of interrogation in the Jaina canon, apart from the particle se, is the particle naṃ which often follows the interrogative pronouns, e.g., se ke naṃ jānaī ke puṇviṃ gamaṇāe ke pachā gamaṇāe—‘who indeed knows who is to go first and last?’ (Nāyādhammakahāo I. 1). It is particularly common with kiṃ, and combines with it to form kiṃnaṃ—‘why?’, ‘how is it that..?’, e.g. kiṃnaṃ tumaṃ na jānavi—‘how is it that you do not know?’, and kiṃnaṃ tumaṃ Devānuppiyā ohayamaṇasasaṃkappe jhiyāyasi—‘why, beloved of the gods, do you ponder, your mind and spirit dejected?’ (Nāyādhammakahāo I. 16). There seems little doubt about the origin of this locution from kiṃ+naṃ, and it has a close parallel in jaṇaṃ < yad+naṃ, which is used frequently for instance in the Paṇṇavaṇāsuttam (11). Sometimes however the final syllable of the particle kiṃnaṃ has been altered and it appears as kiṃa, e.g., kiṃa phude (often repeated in Paṇṇavaṇāsuttam XV. 1), and tume naṃ imā eyārūvā divvā deviḍḍhi, divve devānubhaeve kiṃa laddhe—‘how is it that this heavenly, divine wealth and these heavenly divine powers have been acquired by you?’ (Uvāsagadasāo 167). Both kiṃnaṃ and the alternative form kiṃa occur occasionally in later Jaina literature and in Māhārāṣṭrī. The form kiṃa has often been explained as due to the influence of the instrumental keṇa. It is difficult to believe this in view of the frequency of kiṃnaṃ which is not noticeably different in use and meaning: the instrumental sense is not really more marked in kiṃa than it is in kiṃnaṃ. The change of final -aṃ to -ā is by no means unusual especially in a particle (e.g., samiṣaṃ,

6 Pischel, op. cit., p. 304.
sameya < samyak in Ardhamāgadhī)⁷ One might be tempted to quote the Niya form kīnna—'whoever', 'whatever' in support of the view that kinnā represents kena, but this Niya word may well represent a generalisation of the neuter form rather than a use of the instrumental for the nominative as suggested by Professor Burrow.⁸ kinnam and kiṇṇā mainly belong to Ardhamāgadhī and Jaina Māhāraṣṭrī. They are less restricted dialectally in their occurrence than the interrogative se-clauses, and are part of a general tendency to strengthen the particle kim in interrogations. This tendency is continued in the literary Prākrits, and is of course also a feature of Sanskrit. It is noteworthy that in the Prakrit of the dramas the type of strengthening particle used does not vary so much with the dialect of the speaker as with the style of the author: thus kim khu is used by Aśvaghoṣa in the Śāriputraprakaraṇa; kim quite simply or kim nu is preferred in all dialects by Śudraka in the Mṛṣchakatika; Bhāsa almost invariably writes kim nu khu; Kālidāsa uses kim (nu) khu regardless of whether it is in the Māgadhī spoken by the policemen in Sakuntalā or whether it in the Saurasenī of the Mālavikāgnimitra, and sometimes he uses kim una < kim punah; Rājāśekhara in the Karpūramaṇijarī uses only kim una. The list could be continued, and the Prākrit usage of these authors generally reflects the formulae used for interrogation in Sanskrit by these same authors, e.g., kim nu khalu is prevalent in the Sanskrit text of Bhāsa’s dramas. The analysis of the interrogative constructions alone would be sufficient proof—if proof were needed—that the literary Prākrits of the drama are highly artificial. The formulae for interrogation in particular reflect fashion and even individual style.

Apart from the three locutions se kena kāraṇena, se kim and kiṇṇam which are so characteristic of the Śvetāmbara canon, there is another, rarer method of expressing ‘why’ in the canonical texts, which is nevertheless of interest. This is the phrase kassa heun ‘why’, ‘because of what?’. In this phrase it is quite clear that heun was used adverbially just as was nāma ‘by name’ in Sanskrit. Edgerton⁹ has shown that hetu could be used adverbially both in Pāli and in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, and the Prākrit usage lends support to

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7 Pischel, op. cit., p. 67.
8 T. Burrow, The Language of the Kharoṣṭhī Documents from Chinese Turkestan, Cambridge 1937, p. 35.
9 F. Edgerton, Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, New Haven 1953, s. v. hetu.
this view. Sometimes heum might not appear so readily to be an adverb, as for instance in the phrase kassa nam tam heum ‘for what reason is that?’ (Sūyagaḍāṇga II. 7). An analysis of this phrase shows that tam is the pronoun ‘that’, and not a pronoun adjectival that agrees with heum; the literal translation of the sentence into Sanskrit would be tat kena hetunā. The adverbial use of heum is very clear in the repeated phrases of the Sūyagaḍāṇga (II. 1) no pāṇassa heum dhammamā āikhejjā, no vatthassa heum.....no lenassā heum.....no sayagassā heum ‘he should not teach the law for the sake of a livelihood, for the sake of clothes, nor for the sake of a house or a bed...’. Apart from the adverbial use of heum, the phrase kassa heum is interesting in that it almost certainly represents a stage in the development of the usual interrogative kissa ‘why?’ in Prākrit, Pāli kissa. The change of kassa to kissa is easily explicable by the influence of kim ‘what’, ‘why’. The way in which this influence made itself felt can be seen from a Pāli Jātaka text where kissa is used as a genitive neuter, as opposed to kassa in the masculine. It is not surprising that kim should influence the neuter forms, and particularly that kim ‘why?’ should influence kassa heum ‘why?’ to form kissa (heum), Pāli kissa hetu ‘why?’. Examples of this use of kissa are found in the later parts of the Śvetāmbara canon, e.g., kissa nam tumam mama puttam egante ukkurudiyāe ujjhāvesi ‘why do you cause my son to be abandoned in a deserted place, a place used for refuse?’ (Nirayāvaliyādo I). With simplification of the double consonant and compensatory lengthening kissa became kīsa in Prākrit, and figured as a very usual form of interrogation in Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī texts, such as the Vasudevaśahinḍi and the Lilāvaiṅkaṇā. It was also used in the Māgadhī and Śaurasenī of the dramas, but its frequency is very much dependent not on the dialect, but on the individual taste of the author: thus it is absent from Kālidāsa’s works and rare in the Kuvalayamālā. The form kīsa had to some extent become independent of the interrogative pronoun in Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī, and did not correspond to the normal genitive form, which was kassa in the masculine and neuter, and kīse, kīe in the feminine. kīsa became rare in Apabhṛṣṭa, but it has survived in the Old Gujarati as kisā, kīsā, which, as K. R. Norman has pointed out, can hardly be derived from kīdrśa.11

10 W. Geiger, Pāli Literatur und Sprache, Strassburg 1916, 111.
The more popular Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī texts already show signs of new developments; thus kiha 'why' appears in the Vasudevahindi (92.16), kiha bīhesi 'why are you afraid?'. This word must probably be explained from katham 'how?' influenced by kim. New forms based on the interrogative pronoun, particularly the neuter plural kāinā, become prevalent in Apabhramśa, and a new cycle of fixed locutions begins.