

Some Interrogative Particles in Prākṛit

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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 kāraṇena* '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 Prākṛit, 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 Pischel¹ from Vedic *sed*, *sa+id*. This derivation no longer seems tenable on account of the Pāli evidence, as given for instance by M. Mayrhofer², 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 *taṁ* < *tad* of the other Middle Indo-Aryan languages. Alsdorf³ has shown that the particle *se* was used in the Dhauḷi and Jaugaḍa 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 keṇatthenaṁ, Goyamā, maṇussā tivihā pannattā*—'why then, Gautama, are human beings considered to be of three kinds?' (*Bhagavaī* I. 2); *se keṇatthenaṁ bhante evaṁ vuccāi*—'why then, Sir, is it said that...?'. (*Bhagavaī* 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 taṁ* 'then what is...?', e.g., *se kiṁ taṁ neraīyā*—'what then are the creatures of hell?' (*Paṇṇavaṇāsuttam* 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 *Sūyagaḍaṅga* (II. 1) : *se kiṁ aṅga puṇa vayaṁ...mucchāmo*—'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 Śvetāmbara 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 *Līlāvaīkahā*, 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 Prākritisprachen*, Strassburg 1900, p. 299.

2 M. Mayrhofer, *Handbuch des Pāli*, Heidelberg 1951, p. 109.

3 L. Alsdorf, 'Contributions to the Study of Aśoka's Inscriptions' *Bulletin of the Deccan College Research Institute*, Vol. 20, 1960, p. 259.

weakened to *ji*, though in the case of *je* this change occurred at a somewhat later date and figures mainly in Apabhraṃśa.⁴ The weak particle *si* was only rarely associated with interrogative locutions at this stage, e.g. *Lilāvaikāhā* v. 708 : *kattha puṇo taṃ si dīsihasi*—‘where indeed will you be seen again?’ Professor A. N. Upadhye in his edition⁵ 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 *ṇaṃ* which often follows the interrogative pronouns, e.g., *se ke ṇaṃ jāṇāi ke puṇvīm gamaṇāe ke pacchā gamaṇāe*—‘who indeed knows who is to go first and last?’ (*Nāyādharmakāhā* I. 1). It is particularly common with *kiṃ*, and combines with it to form *kiṇṇaṃ*—‘why?’, ‘how is it that...?’, e.g. *kiṇṇaṃ tumaṃ na jāṇasi*—‘how is it that you do not know?’, and *kiṇṇaṃ tumaṃ Devānuppiyā ohayamaṇasaṃkappe jhiyāyasi*—‘why, beloved of the gods, do you ponder, your mind and spirit dejected?’ (*Nāyādharmakāhā* I. 16). There seems little doubt about the origin of this locution from *kiṃ* + *ṇaṃ*, and it has a close parallel in *jaṇṇaṃ* < *yad* + *ṇaṃ*, which is used frequently for instance in the *Paṇṇavaṇāsuttaṃ* (11). Sometimes however the final syllable of the particle *kiṇṇaṃ* has been altered and it appears as *kiṇṇā*, e.g., *kinnā phude* (often repeated in *Paṇṇavaṇāsuttaṃ* XV. 1), and *tume ṇaṃ imā eyārūvā divvā deviddhī, divve devāṇubhāve kinnā laddhe*—‘how is it that this heavenly, divine wealth and these heavenly divine powers have been acquired by you?’ (*Uvāsagadasāo* 167). Both *kiṇṇaṃ* and the alternative form *kiṇṇā* occur occasionally in later Jaina literature and in Māhārāṣṭrī. The form *kiṇṇā* has often been explained as due to the influence of the instrumental *kena*.⁶ It is difficult to believe this in view of the frequency of *kiṇṇaṃ* which is not noticeably different in use and meaning: the instrumental sense is not really more marked in *kiṇṇā* than it is in *kiṇṇaṃ*. The change of final *-aṃ* to *-ā* is by no means unusual especially in a particle (e.g., *samiyaṃ*,

4 ‘The Indeclinable *je* in Middle Indo-Aryan’, *Bhāratīya Vidyā* Vols. XX-XXI, p. 213.

5 *Lilāvaī* of Kōūhala, ed. A. N. Upadhye, *Singhi Jain Series* Vol. 31, Bombay 1949, pp. 361-362.

6 Pischel, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

samiyā < *samyak* in Ardhamāgadhī).⁷ One might be tempted to quote the Niya form *kiṁna*—‘whoever’, ‘whatever’ in support of the view that *kinṇā* 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 *kiṇṇam* and *kinṇā* 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 *kiṁ* in interrogations. This tendency is continued in the literary Prākritis, 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 *kiṁ khu* is used by Aśvaghoṣa in the *Śārīputraprakaraṇa*; *kiṁ* quite simply or *kiṁ nu* is preferred in all dialects by Sūdraka in the *Mṛcchakatika*; Bhāsa almost invariably writes *kiṁ ṇu khu*; Kālidāsa uses *kiṁ (ṇu) khu* regardless of whether it is in the Māgadhī spoken by the policemen in *Śakuntalā* or whether it is in the Śaurasenī of the *Mālavikāgnimītra*, and sometimes he uses *kiṁ una* < *kiṁ punaḥ*; Rājaśekhara in the *Karpūramañjarī* uses only *kiṁ 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., *kiṁ 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 Prākritis 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 kiṁ* 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 heuṁ* ‘why’, ‘because of what?’. In this phrase it is quite clear that *heuṁ* 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

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 ñaṃ taṃ heum* 'for what reason is that?' (*Sūyagaḍaṅga* II. 7). An analysis of this phrase shows that *taṃ* is the pronoun 'that', and not a pronoun adjective 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 *Sūyagaḍaṅga* (II. 1) *no paṇassa heum dhammaṃ āikhejjā, no vatthassa heum.....no leṇassa heum.....no sayanaṇassa 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 *kīsa* 'why?' in Prākṛit, Pāli *kissa*. The change of *kassa* to *kissa* is easily explicable by the influence of *kiṃ* 'what', 'why'. The way in which this influence made itself felt can be seen from a Pāli Jātaka text¹⁰ where *kissa* is used as a genitive neuter, as opposed to *kassa* in the masculine. It is not surprising that *kiṃ* should influence the neuter forms, and particularly that *kiṃ* '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 ñaṃ tumaṃ mama puttaṃ egante ukkurudiyāe ujjhāvesi* 'why do you cause my son to be abandoned in a deserted place, a place used for refuse?' (*Nirayāvaliyāo* I). With simplification of the double consonant and compensatory lengthening *kissa* became *kīsa* in Prākṛit, and figured as a very usual form of interrogation in Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī texts, such as the *Vasudevahiṇḍi* and the *Līlāvaīkahā*. 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 works⁶ 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 Apabhraṃśa, but it has survived in the Old Gujarati as *kisā*, *kiśā*, which, as K. R. Norman has pointed out, can hardly be derived from *kīḍṛśa*.¹¹

10 W. Geiger, *Pāli Literatur und Sprache*, Strassburg 1916, 111.

11 K. R. Norman, *JRAS* 1964, p. 67.

The more popular Jaina Māhārāṣṭrī texts already show signs of new developments; thus *kiha* 'why' appears in the *Vasudevahiṇḍi* (92. 16), *kiha bihesi* '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 *kāim*, become prevalent in Apabhraṃśa, and a new cycle of fixed locutions begins.

