Snp 3.10 — Sn 3:10 Kokālika

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

3:10 Kokālika

SN 6:10 contains a shorter, less graphic version of this sutta.

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Then the monk Kokālika1 went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, bowed down to him and sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, Sāriputta & Moggallāna have evil desires. They have fallen under the sway of evil desires."

When this was said, the Blessed One said to him, "Don't say that, Kokālika. Don't say that, Kolālika. Make your mind confident in Sāriputta & Moggallāna. They are admirable people."

A second time… A third time, the monk Kokālika said to the Blessed One, "Even though the lord Blessed One2 inspires conviction and faith in me, Sāriputta & Moggallāna have evil desires. They have fallen under the sway of evil desires."

A third time, the Blessed One said to him, "Don't say that, Kokālika. Don't say that, Kolālika. Make your mind confident in Sāriputta & Moggallāna. They are admirable people."

Then the monk Kokālika, getting up from his seat, bowed down to the Blessed One, circumambulated him, keeping him to his right, and departed.

Then not long after he had departed, Kokālika's whole body became covered with boils the size of mustard seeds. From the size of mustard seeds, they became the size of green gram. From the size of green gram, they became the size of black beans. From the size of black beans, they became the size of jujube pits. From the size of jujube pits, they became the size of jujube fruits. From the size of jujube fruits, they became the size of myrobalans. From the size of myrobalans, they became the size of unripe vilva fruits. From the size of unripe vilva fruits, they became the size of small jackfruits. When they were the size of small jackfruits, they burst. Blood and pus flowed out. Then the monk Kokālika died of that disease and, having died, he reappeared in the Paduma hell for engendering hatred in his heart against Sāriputta & Moggallāna.

Then Brahmā Sahampati,3 in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to him, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to the Blessed One, "Lord, the monk Kokālika has died and, having died, has reappeared in the Paduma hell for engendering hatred in his heart against Sāriputta & Moggallāna." That is what Brahmā Sahampati said. Having said that, having bowed down, he circumambulated the Blessed One, keeping him to his right, and disappeared right there.

Then when the night had passed, the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Monks, last night Brahmā Sahampati, in the far extreme of the night, his extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, came to me. On arrival, having bowed down to me, he stood to one side. As he was standing there, he said to me, 'Lord, the monk Kokālika has died and, having died, has reappeared in the Paduma hell for engendering hatred in his heart against Sāriputta & Moggallāna.' That is what Brahmā Sahampati said. Having said that, having bowed down, he circumambulated me, keeping me to his right, and disappeared right there."

When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One, "Lord, how long is the measure of the lifespan in the Paduma hell?"

"Long, monk, is the measure of the lifespan in the Paduma hell. It's not easy to calculate 'this many years' or 'this many hundreds of years' or 'this many thousands of years' or 'this many hundreds of thousands of years.'"

"But, lord, can a simile be made?"

“It can, monk,” said the Blessed One. “Suppose that there were a twenty-measure Kosalan cartload of sesame seeds. From that, a man would remove a sesame seed every hundred years.4 That twenty-measure Kosalan cartload of sesame seeds would come to an end in this manner more quickly than a single Abbuda [Swelling] hell. Like twenty Abbuda hells is one Nirabbuda [Free from Swelling] hell. Like twenty Nirabbuda hells is one Ababa [Alas!] hell. Like twenty Ababa hells is one Ahaha hell. Like twenty Ahaha hells is one Aṭaṭa hell. Like twenty Aṭaṭa hells is one Kumuda [White Water Lily] hell. Like twenty Kumuda hells is one Sogandhika [Fragrant White Water Lily] hell. Like twenty Sogandhika hells is one Uppalaka [Blue Lotus] hell. Like twenty Uppalaka hells is one Puṇḍarīka [White Lotus] hell. Like twenty Puṇḍarīka hells is one Paduma [Red Lotus] hell.5

“The monk Kokālika has reappeared in the Paduma hell, for engendering hatred in his heart against Sāriputta & Moggallāna.”

That is what the Blessed One said. Having said that, the One Well-Gone, the Teacher, said further:

“Surely, when a person is born,

an axe is born in his mouth,

with which he cuts himself—

the fool saying a bad statement.

Whoever praises one deserving censure

or censures one deserving praise,

accumulates wickedness6 with his mouth,

and in that wickedness

finds no ease.

Next to nothing is the bad throw

when one loses money at dice.

But great is the bad throw

when one gets angered

at those well-gone.

For one hundred thousand Nirabbudas

and thirty-six and five Abbudas,

one who maligns noble ones,

directing his words & heart toward evil,

goes to hell.7

He goes to hell,
the one who asserts
what didn't take place,
as does the one
who, having done,
says, 'I didn't.'
Both—low-acting people—
there become equal:
after death, in the place beyond.8

Whoever harasses
an innocent man,
a man pure, without blemish:
The evil comes right back to the fool
like fine dust
thrown against the wind.9

One devoted to the strings of greed
slanders others with his words:
faithless, stingy, miserly, mean,
devoted to divisive tales.

You with your hard road of a mouth,
untrue, ignoble,
destroyer of progress,
evil, doer of wrong,
lowest of men, wicked, degenerate:
Don't speak a lot here.
You are headed to hell.
You scatter dust

to your harm.
You, an offender,
malign the good,
and, having engaged
in many sorts of bad conduct
are going for a long time
to the pit.
For no one's action is annihilated.
Surely its owner gets it back.
An offender, the fool,
sees suffering for himself
in the next world.

He goes to the place set with iron spikes,
the sharp-bladed iron stake,
where the food, as is fitting,
resembles a ball of heated iron.
When they [the hell-wardens]
speak, they don't speak lovingly.
They [the hell beings] can't run away.
They're not going to shelter.
They lie on ashes strewn about.
They enter a blazing mass of fire.
Tying them up with nets,
they [the hell-wardens] strike them
with hammers made of iron.
Truly, they go to a blind darkness
that spreads out like a fog.
Then they enter a copper pot,
a blazing mass of fire,

in which they cook for a long, long time,
bobbing up & down in a mass of fire.
There the offender then cooks
in a mixture of blood & pus.
In whatever direction he leans to rest
he festers at the touch.
There the offender then cooks
in an ooze where worms live,
and there is no shore to which he can go,
for the cooking pots all around
are all the same.
Then they enter
the sharp sword-leaf forest
where their limbs are cut off.
Seizing them by the tongue with a hook,
they [the hell-wardens] strike them,
dragging them back & forth.
Then they come to the Vettaraṇin,10
hard to cross,
with sharp blades, razor blades,
and there they fall in,
the fools,
evil-doers having done
evil deeds.
There, while they wail,
voracious black & spotted dogs,
jackals, & flocks of ravens chew on them.
Vultures & crows pick at them.

How hard, indeed, is this way of life there

that offending people come to see.11

So, for the remainder of life here,

a person, heedful, should do his duty.

Those loads of sesame seeds

compared to the Paduma hell

have been calculated by those who know

as five times ten thousand crores,12

plus twelve times one hundred more.

The length of the hells of suffering

described here

is how long [the hell-beings]

will have to dwell there.

So when in the company of those

who are pure, admirable, excellent,

one should constantly guard

one's words & heart.

vv. 657–678

Notes

1. Kokālika is a bhikkhu, or Buddhist monk. Normally, the texts refer to Buddhist monks as Ven. So-and-so, but in this case, the following story will show why posterity did not accord this honor to Kokālika. According to SnA, this Kokālika was not the same Kokālika who was one of Devadatta's followers. If that is so, it's remarkable that both Kokālikas expressed mistrust of Ven. Sāriputta and Moggallāna in exactly the same words (see Cv VII.4.2). An alternative possibility is that the two Kokālikas were actually the same person, and that he participated in Devadatta's schism during the "not long" period mentioned in this sutta separating his denunciation of Sāriputta and Moggallāna from the onset of his resulting disease.

2. This is an exaggerated form of address. See Ud 8:7, note 1.

3. See SN 6:1.

4. Reading vassa-satassa vassa-satassa with the Burmese edition. The Sri Lankan version reads, "every hundred years, every thousand years." The Thai edition reads, "every

hundred years, every thousand years, every hundred thousand years."

5. Perhaps it goes without saying that the names of some of worst hells are ironic. SnA asserts that these are not separate hells, but simply different periods of time in the single Avīci hell, but it gives no explanation or justification for its assertion.

6. The word for wickedness, kali, is the same as the word for a bad throw at dice, which becomes the image in the following verse.

7. The version of this sutta at SN 6:10 ends here.

8. This verse = Dhp 306 and is also found in Iti 48.

9. This verse = Dhp 125.

10. Vettaraṇin: Literally, "having a battle of twigs/canes." SnA identifies this as the river of lye-water mentioned in MN 130, which contains a similarly graphic description of hell.

11. Reading passati with the Thai and Sri Lankan editions. The Burmese edition has phusati, "touch."

12. A crore is a large number that SNA calculates as equal to ten million.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 45; MN 97; MN 130; MN 135; MN 136; SN 35:135; SN 42:8; AN 3:101; AN 4:111; AN 5:129; AN 8:7–8; AN 8:40; Dhp 306–319; Iti 18; Iti 20; Iti 30; Iti 32; Iti 64; Iti 70; Iti 81