

Chapter Notes for Chapter 6: Spiritual Friendship

“Enough, Ananda, do not weep and wail...” Digha Nikaya, Mahaparinibbana Sutta (sutta 16), 5.14. [DN ii, 144]. This sutta is the sixteenth in the Long Discourses (Digha Nikaya). This rambling narrative, very moving in many places, connects many teachings that the Buddha gave in his last days, and is the place where the summary of the Eightfold Path into morality, meditation, and wisdom is presented as the Buddha’s last bequest.

In an article in the *Bangkok Post* (17 May 2000), a monk who was previously a doctor, Venerable Mettanando, points out that the symptoms suffered by the Buddha prior to his death and in his previous severe illness fit with a condition suffered by elderly people called mesenteric infarction, where there is an obstruction of the blood vessels to the wall of the intestine. It is a lethal condition, the final stages of which are usually brought on by a particularly large or rich meal. The intestines cannot cope and they rupture. There is internal bleeding, bloody diarrhoea, a lot of pain, and strong thirst, and without modern surgery the person invariably dies within twenty hours.

Molnar and Tapponier (1975) give an account of the collision of India and Asia.