

## 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF WATER IN THE RELIGION

### 2.1 Buddhism

When the Buddha left Pāñaliputta (now Patna) during his last journey, he had to cross the Ganges in order to get to Vesali. The town people who had come to bid him farewell walked up and down the river bank looking for a ferry or a boat to use to cross the river. According to the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, 'as quickly as a strong man might stretch out his arm and draw it back again, the Buddha and his monks vanished from this bank and reappeared on the other bank of the river' (D.II,89).



**Sarnath** is a small village on the outer edge of the city of Varanasi (Varanasi) in northern India and is the place where the Buddha first proclaimed his Dhamma to the world. The city of Sarnath, is located 13 kilometres (8 miles) northeast of the temple city of Varanasi, and lies near the convergence of the Ganges and Varuna rivers. To die in Vārāḍāsā or to bathe in the Ganges there, is the goal of every devote Hindu. In the Tipinaka, Vārāḍāsā is sometimes called Kasi, the city's oldest name, or Bārānasā (D.II,146). The four sites of **Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Varanasi and Kusinara** -- all in the lower Ganges river drainage -are said to have been chosen by Siddhartha himself as 'places which should be honored after his death' (Conze 1959: 34).

