



Niranjana River Recharge Mission

Nirjhar Niranjana–Nirmal Niranjana

A campaign to turn a dream into reality

A small river originates from Belgadha and Lavalong of Simaria block under Chatra district of Jharkhand. Flowing silently in a narrow channel between the rocky hills, this river becomes bigger and wider when it enters Bihar through Hunterganj. This river is known as Niranjana till Bodh Gaya and after that, it is known as Falgu. This is the river on the banks of which Siddhartha became ‘Buddha’. Hindus all over the world perform *Pind Daan* in this river for the salvation of their ancestors. We can say that on the banks of Niranjana one gets both transcendent knowledge and salvation.

There is a lot of discussion in Buddhist literature about the constant flowing of water throughout the years in the Niranjana River. Unfortunately today this is not so, as the river is almost dry. Except for a few months of the rainy season, the sight of water in its bed has become rare. This state of the river disheartens Buddhists, Hindus, and environmentalists around the world. Everyone wants to see an ever-flowing Niranjana, but it seems like a dream. ‘Niranjana River Recharge Mission’ is a campaign to convert this dream into a reality. Fortunately, this campaign is based not on emotions alone. Rather it is a perfect combination of pure emotions and pragmatic enterprise.

There are innumerable invisible benefits of any river than visual ones. But usually people are able to experience the visual benefits only. By working while keeping in mind the “holistic development” of the villages along the river banks, the river gets automatically benefited and the feeling of “use and conserve” instead of “consumption” is also awakened among people.



Image of the foundation stone laying of “Budha Budhi Dam” on Ramrekha river.

Work on Ramrekha is showing a ray of hope

Indian tradition believes that no river ever dies. In fact, she just disappears. If man creates a favorable environment by his conduct and enterprise, then she reappears again. This is not just mere rhetoric. Very recently in the year 2017, a river reappeared in its ever-flowing form after a long spell of dryness. This is the story of the river Ramrekha flowing in Aurangabad and Bodh Gaya district of Bihar state in India.

The story of reviving the Ramrekha River originates from the Dumaria block of Gaya district and the Dev block of Aurangabad district in Bihar. These blocks are extremely drought-prone areas. In the absence of irrigation facilities, there was a sway of unemployment and rampant

migration. This area had become a recruitment center for the Naxalites. The farmers of these areas were agitating since 1952 to build a dam on the Ramrekha river near Chhakarbandha Panchayat. In every election, this issue was raised at the local level. Every candidate promised to get this done, but nothing happened.

In 1992, an estimate of eight and a half crore rupees was also made by the Irrigation Department of the Government of Bihar, in which there was discussion of building a dam at a place called ‘Budha-Budhi’ on the Ramrekha River. However, due to some constraints, it did not work. For a long time, when no initiative was taken by the government in this regard, the people associated with the

Gokul Foundation took the lead in this matter and within a few years, the ‘Budha-Budhi’ dam was completed. The work for which the government had made an estimate of eight and a half crores, was done in less than two crore rupees by Gokul Foundation. Budha-Budhi Project was a peoples’ project. Common man contributed immensely to the success of this project. Social organizations like Aakar Charitable Trust also extended their helping hand in a very liberal way.

After the construction of the Budha-Budhi Dam, one more work was done. A canal was also dug to carry the water from the dam to the field of the farmers. Hundreds of people offered their free labor for months and thus

built a canal that is 3 km long, 22 ft deep, and 17 ft wide. With the construction of dams and canals, all the ponds and wells of the nearby areas gradually recharged themselves. All this had a miraculous result which even the people of Gokul Foundation did not imagine. Soon the Ramrekha River reappeared with its ever-flowing currents. The river, which did not have a drop of water in December, started flowing even in the scorching heat of June-July. Millions of people and animals got benefitted. It was virtually a new lease of life for the farmers. Today, water flows throughout the year in the Ramrekha river. No doubt Ramrekha was a small river and therefore, the challenges were less. But Ramrekha's experience is enough to prove that rivers do not die, they just disappear. Once the due effort is done, they reappear with their ever-flowing currents.

Gokul Foundation is carrying on the legacy of Ramrekha

Gokul Foundation of India is working diligently on the basis of the experience and understanding that developed while working on the Ramrekha River. Today it has its own campus at a place called Mali located in Navinagar block of Aurangabad district, from where research, training, and experimentation on various social subjects is being continued. It will be no exaggeration to say that the Niranjana River Recharge Mission is driven by the energy and goodwill of the Gokul Foundation.

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People coming out from different villages to do Shramdaan for "Ramrekha River".



Villagers doing Shramdaan in Ramrekha canal



The image of the water conserved for about 3 kilometers behind the dam after the construction of Budha-Budhi Dam. This is the same place where not even a single drop of water coming from the hills in the form of rainwater stayed.

Efforts so far and further Action Plan



An image of a meeting being held for Niranjana.

On August 22, 2021, hundreds of Buddhist monks, public representatives, and social activists started the 'Niranjana (Falgu) River Recharge Mission' by offering prayers and lighting the lamp on the banks of the Niranjana River in Bodh Gaya.

Soon after, a team of Yatris took the journey from the origin of the river to its confluence. During this, wherever the team of Yatris passed, it was warmly welcomed by the people. Everybody expressed their desire to join the campaign to make the Niranjana

ever-flowing again. People also gave valuable suggestions to make the mission successful.

From the origin of the river to its confluence, Niranjana River Recharge Mission plans to build more than two hundred 'check dams', small and large, within a radius of 5 km on both the sides of the river and plant more than one million trees along the river in the next 10 years. When there will be lakhs of trees on the banks of the river, they will never allow it to dry up. The science behind this logic can be understood by the analogy of Air Conditioners. Just as an Air Conditioner draws water from its surrounding environment and fills the bucket with water even in the scorching heat, similarly these trees extract water from the air and release it drop by drop around their roots.



The target of 'Niranjana (Falgu) River Recharge Mission' for the year 2022

- Listing of villages within a 5 km radius on either side of the river.
- Survey and listing of probable spots where check dams can be built.
- To convince a maximum number of people in the villages along the banks of the river for digging ponds on their land.
- To establish liaison with Chhath Puja committees of the villages and towns on the banks of the river.
- Build at least 5 check dams in the vicinity of the river course and campaign for the planting of 50,000 trees in consultation and with the cooperation of the government and the social institutions.
- Ensuring active participation of all socio-religious institutions of Bodh Gaya and Gaya in this campaign.

and social organizations in the villages and towns wherever Niranjana flows.

Niranjana River Recharge Mission has no plans to interfere in the natural course of the river Niranjana. Its efforts will be solely on the 5 kilometer stretch of both banks where all possible measures will be taken to stop the rainwater. At the same time, indiscriminate exploitation of groundwater would also be discouraged.



Retired IAS Nangzey Dorjee, Member Secretary of Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee prayed for the success of Niranjana Mission and complimented its convener.



Buddhist monks performed mass prayer with Ven. P. Seewalee Thero, General Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society of India for the success of the Niranjana Mission.

Rivers disappear when more water is drawn from them than what is being released back to them. The same thing happened with Niranjana. The mission wants to change this situation by building check dams and planting lakhs of trees around its banks. When at least more than two hundred 'check dams' are built on both sides of the river and more than one million trees are planted on its banks, then a situation will arise in which the water drawn from the river will be lesser and the supply will be more. Once it happens, the Niranjana River will re-start flowing throughout the years and millions of people of the world, who come to Bodh Gaya and are heart-broken after seeing the dying condition of the river, will be overjoyed. Their dream of seeing this great river once more in an ever-flowing form will come true. If Niranjana appears among us with its full splendor throughout the year, then its significance will not remain confined to the religious domain alone, rather it will have a lot of environmental connotations as well. People from all over the world will flock to learn and imitate the Niranjana Model. ■



Convener of the Niranjana Mission was honored by Kiran Lama, Secretary, Daijokyo Buddhist Temple and eminent scholar of Buddhist literature, Dr. Prof. Kailash Prasad.

<h3>First phase of Niranjana river journey completed</h3> <p>GY CORRESPONDENT SEPT 07</p> <p>The first phase of the Niranjana River journey is over. This journey started from BodhGaya main temple on 29th August 2021. In which from the point of origin of Simaria to various vil-</p>	<p>Niranjana river eternal, in future efforts will be made to plant lakhs of trees from Gaya to the origin of Chatra district in collaboration with other organizations. Expressing heartfelt gratitude to all the colleagues involved in Nirjhar Niranjana Nirmal Niranjana Abhiyan for the success of this first campaign, a Peepal tree was planted at the Sangam site. Sanjay Sajjan, Suresh Singh, Rakesh Kumar Pappu, Ravi Nayak, Gautam Kumar, Lalan Paswan, etc. were present in this, the convener of Nirjhar Niranjana Nirmal Niranjana.</p>	<h3>बूढ़ वंदना के साथ निर्जर्जर निरंजना मिशन का शुभारंभ</h3> <p>गया भास्कर 30-08-2021</p> <p>सात हफ्ते का अभियान महाबोधि मंदिर से शुरू</p> <p>कोटाख: निरंजना मिशन का शुभारंभ 2600 साल पहले निरंजना नदी निर्जर्जर थी। भव्यता बुद्ध ने वैशाली पृथिवी के दिन नदी में स्नान किया था। लेकिन मानवी की दृष्टि से नदी का स्तर गिरा रहा था। दुर्भाग्यवश 1950-60 के दशक में अनेक बांधों का निर्माण हुआ जिससे नदी का स्तर और गिरा गया। 7 वर्षों का शुभारंभ महाबोधि मंदिर के निरंजना नदी बुद्ध स्नान के दिन शुरू किया गया। अभियान के निरंजना नदी बुद्ध स्नान के दिन शुरू किया गया। अभियान के निरंजना नदी बुद्ध स्नान के दिन शुरू किया गया।</p>	<p>गया भास्कर 30-08-2021</p> <p>निरंजना नदी में सालों भर पानी की मौजूदगी को लेकर होगा कामकाज</p> <p>निरंजना नदी में सालों भर पानी की मौजूदगी को लेकर होगा कामकाज। निरंजना नदी में सालों भर पानी की मौजूदगी को लेकर होगा कामकाज। निरंजना नदी में सालों भर पानी की मौजूदगी को लेकर होगा कामकाज।</p>	<h3>आज</h3> <p>निरंजना मिशन की पांच सदस्यीय टीम को ही झंडी दिखाकर किया गया स्वागत</p> <p>निरंजना मिशन की पांच सदस्यीय टीम को ही झंडी दिखाकर किया गया स्वागत। निरंजना मिशन की पांच सदस्यीय टीम को ही झंडी दिखाकर किया गया स्वागत। निरंजना मिशन की पांच सदस्यीय टीम को ही झंडी दिखाकर किया गया स्वागत।</p>
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Ven. P. Seewalee Thero
General Secretary

30.12.2021

To
Shri Sanjoy Sajjan
Niranjana Rivar Recharge Mission,
Gokul Foundation of India.

Dear Sir,

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your mail dated 27th December, 2021, addressed to Ven. P. Seewalee Thero, General Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society of India.

I am to convey you that the General Secretary of the Society has expressed his satisfaction and support to revive the Holy River Niranjana through the aims and objects of Niranjana Rivar Recharge Mission. It has been rightly pointed out that the Buddha took bath in this Holy River Niranjana and as such the Buddhists of the World regard the Holy River with high religious sentiments. The Hindu devotees also customarily regard the Holy River Niranjana for their rituals. It is, therefore, very much appropriate that the Holy River be given due attention for restoring its original status with sufficient water flow.

The General Secretary has expressed due regards to the decisions taken by the Core Group of the Mission with his support to the extent possible with the observation that the State and the Central Governments should be requested to do the needful for revival the Holy River Niranjana. He has expressed all the best wishes for a positive outcome from the working of the Mission with the Greetings for the New Year - 2022.

Bhavatu Sabba Mangalam,

Yours in Service of the Dhamma,



(Ranadhish Choudhuri)
Secretary to the General Secretary,
Maha Bodhi Society of India,
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