

**A JOURNEY TO THE
ABODE OF
SALVATION: A
PILGRIMAGE TO
MUKTINATH
A CALL OF THE SACRED**

DATE: OCTOBER,2022

The journey to Muktinath is more than a trip; it is a pilgrimage for many, a quest for salvation and blessings. Our own quest began with a mix of excitement and reverence, aiming to experience the powerful spiritual energy of one of Nepal's most revered sites. Our plan was a unique blend of modern convenience and rugged road adventure, taking us from the capital to the high Himalayas and back in a whirlwind three-day expedition.

Day 1: Soaring to the Sky and the Rugged Road to Jomsom

The Flight: Kathmandu to Pokhara (Buddha Air)

Our adventure began at the domestic terminal of Tribhuvan International Airport. Boarding the twin-engine Buddha Air aircraft, we felt the first thrill of the journey. The short flight to Pokhara was a visual treat in itself, offering breathtaking aerial views of the terraced hills, winding rivers, and, on a clear day, the majestic Himalayan range.

The Scorpio's Ascent: Pokhara to Jomsom via Myagdi

Upon landing in Pokhara, our trusted steed for the

journey was waiting: a sturdy Mahindra Scorpio, built for the challenging roads ahead. We began our drive, leaving the comfort of the lake city behind. The road from Pokhara to Beni is relatively smooth, but the true adventure began as we turned north towards **Myagdi**.

The road transformed into a dramatic, rugged track carved into the side of deep river gorges. Our Scorpio navigated the dusty, winding path with determination, crossing shaky bridges over roaring rivers like the Kali Gandaki. The landscape changed dramatically—from lush, green hills to the arid, windswept, and dramatic cliffs that characterize the **Mustang** region. It was a long, jostling, but utterly fascinating drive through some of Nepal's most raw and powerful geography. We finally reached **Jomsom** by evening, exhausted but exhilarated. The cold, dry wind of the Kali Gandaki valley was a stark reminder of our high-altitude location. We settled in for the night, acclimatizing to the thin air, with the silhouette of Nilgiri mountain dominating the view.

Day 2: The Pilgrimage and the Long Return

The Sacred Destination: Muktinath Temple

We woke up early to a crystal-clear Himalayan morning. The drive from Jomsom to **Muktinath** is relatively short but climbs significantly. The landscape became even more barren and majestic, resembling a desert nestled high in the mountains. Arriving at the temple complex at 3,710 meters, the atmosphere was charged with devotion.

The **Muktinath Temple** itself is a profound symbol of religious harmony—a sacred place for both Hindus and Buddhists. We first took the ritual "**Goti Bath**" in the freezing, sacred waters of the **108 water spouts** (Muktidhara), arranged in a semicircle. It is believed this purifies the soul and brings salvation (*mukti*). Despite the icy shock, the experience was spiritually electrifying and deeply cleansing. We then offered prayers at the main pagoda-style temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu and witnessed the eternal flame that burns atop a natural gas source beside the water spring.

The Marathon Drive: Muktinath to Baglung

Fulfilled and blessed, we began our long return journey. We retraced our route through Jomsom and back down the challenging Myagdi road. The drive was long and demanding, but the Scorpio handled it admirably. As dusk fell, we descended into the lush,

warmer hills of **Baglung**, where we checked into a hotel for a well-earned night's rest.

Day 3: A Local Goddess and the Flight Home

Morning Devotion: Baglung Malika

Before our flight back, we took a short drive to the famous **Baglung Malika Temple**, a significant shrine dedicated to Goddess Bhagwati, perched on a hill overlooking the town. It was a peaceful and fitting end to our spiritual journey, offering a final moment of prayer and enjoying the panoramic views of the surrounding hills and the Kali Gandaki river valley.

The Flight Home: Pokhara to Kathmandu

We drove back to Pokhara to catch our return Buddha Air flight to Kathmandu. As the plane ascended, we looked down at the dramatic landscape we had just traversed by road. The contrast between the arduous, day-long drive and the swift, one-hour flight was striking. We landed in Kathmandu by afternoon, our hearts and souls full of the powerful memories, spiritual energy, and stunning landscapes from our unforgettable pilgrimage to Muktinath.

Conclusion: This journey was a perfect capsule of Nepal's diversity—from the convenience of air travel to the ruggedness of a Himalayan road trip, all woven together with the profound thread of faith and the timeless beauty of the mountains.



Figure: At Muktinath Temple Starting Point.



Figure: Amazed By The View.



Figure: At Pokhara Airport..



Figure: Fewa Taal ma.



Figure: Father Son Duo.