

A

JOURNEY TO THE CELESTIAL POND: A TREK TO PACHPOKHARI

A CALL OF THE SACRED LAKE

DATE: AUGUST,2020

Nestled high in the lap of the Himalayas, Pachpokhari—the "Five Ponds"—is more than a destination; it is a pilgrimage. In the crisp, clear air of the trekking season, my friends and I embarked on a three-day journey to this sacred alpine lake. Our mission was simple: to walk from the historic town of Chautara, immerse ourselves in the rugged beauty of the Sindhupalchowk district, and pay our respects at the serene waters revered by both Hindus and Buddhists. The promise of a bike ride on the return leg added a thrilling end to our adventure.

DAY 1: CHAUTARA TO PHURSE: THE ASCENT BEGINS

Distance: Approximately 6-7 hours of walking.

Our journey began in the bustling town of **Chautara**, the district headquarters, still bearing the resilient spirit of reconstruction. After a hearty breakfast of dal bhat, we shouldered our packs and took our first steps. The trail immediately began to climb, leaving the town's noise behind and entering a world of terraced farms and rhododendron forests.

The path was a steady, challenging ascent through charming Tamang and Sherpa villages like **Thulo Dhunga** and **Dokhu**. The warmth of the people was

incredible; we were often greeted with cheerful "Namaste"s from locals working in their fields. The air grew cooler with every hour, and the views of the surrounding hills became more dramatic. By late afternoon, weary but exhilarated, we reached the small settlement of **Phurse**. We set up camp for the night, and as the sun dipped below the mountain ridges, the temperature plummeted. Huddled around a warm meal, under a blanket of a million stars, we felt a world away from everything.

DAY 2: PHURSE TO PACHPOKHARI: INTO THE HIMALAYAN WILDERNESS

Distance: Approximately 5-6 hours of walking.

Waking up to the cold, thin air was a jolt to the system. After a warm tea, we began the most spectacular leg of our trek. The trail now wound through dense, misty alpine forests and across high ridges. With every step, the Himalayan giants seemed to grow larger on the horizon.

The final push to Pachpokhari is a steep climb, but the anticipation fuels you. And then, you break through the tree line. At an altitude of over 3,600 meters, the celestial **Pachpokhari** reveals itself—a breathtakingly beautiful group of five pristine ponds,

their crystal-clear waters reflecting the mighty peaks of Dorje Lakpa, Madiya, and Phurbi Chyachu. The sense of peace and accomplishment was overwhelming. We spent hours there, in silent reverence, absorbing the sublime beauty. We set up our second camp near the lake, and as darkness fell, the silence was absolute, broken only by the wind and our own whispers of awe.

DAY 3: PACHPOKHARI TO KIM, AND THE BIKE RIDE HOME

Distance: 3-4 hours descent to Kim, then bike ride.

Our final morning was magical, watching the first rays of sun illuminate the peaks and set the pond's surface on fire. After a final, longing look, we began our descent. The journey down was faster but still offered new perspectives of the valley below.

Instead of retracing our steps all the way to Chautara, we descended towards the road head at **Kim**. The sight of the dusty road was a strange contrast to the wilderness we had just left. And waiting for us was our thrilling ride home—a **motorbike**. We mounted our bikes, the wind whipping past us as we sped along the winding hill roads. The freedom was exhilarating. The lush green

hills rolled past us in a blur, a fast-paced finale to our slow, purposeful trek. The cool air of the high mountains gradually gave way to the warmer air of the lower valleys, marking the end of our incredible journey.

EPILOGUE: A TAPESTRY OF TRAVEL

This three-day trek to Pachpokhari was a perfect tapestry of different travel experiences. It had the physical challenge and deep connection of a multi-day hike, the profound spiritual peace of a remote Himalayan sanctuary, and the raw, adrenaline-fueled thrill of a bike ride down mountain roads. It was a journey that engaged the body, calmed the mind, and exhilarated the spirit—a true Nepali adventure in every sense.



Figure: At Dolaghat Bridge...



Figure: In the heavy rain...



Figure: In the middle of the jungle.



Figure: Behind Me Gaurishankar Himal..



Figure: Pachpokhari shown by Captain Subeen..



Figure: Tiredness After walking nonstop.