

## The Temple having Multiple Names and Tantrik Images: Rani Pokhari

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### Abstract

*Rani pokhari lies at the heart of Kathmandu city. It was located at the north eastern boundary of Hanumandhoka royal palace during the medieval period. It was constructed by King Pratap Malla of Kathmandu in N.S. 789/790 (1668/69 C.E.). Its original name is Nhu: pukhu as the king constructed a new pond in the city, which later became famous by the name "Rani pokhari." Among hundreds of monuments of the Kathmandu valley, Rani pokhari is one, which along with its pleasant beauty, reflects marvelous art and architecture of medieval history. It is a monument dedicated to a deceased son by a parent with the wish of absolution of his soul. The granthakut styled deval established at the center of Rani pokhari is popular by several names as Balgopaleshwor, Yamaleshwor, Harishankari and Gaurishankar. A number of stone and terracotta images placed inside and outside the temple of Rani pokhari, and its premises reveals the essence of utmost tantrism mingled art of the medieval period. Detailed study about the naming of a deval, specific motive of placement of various images and their features have not been conducted yet. In this context, what is the temple actually named after? Which images are established in or around the temple and at the pond premises? What does the specific design of a pond and its iconographic features reveal? are the questions raised in this research and the answer is intended to be addressed. To find out the actual name of a temple, the identification of its images and the purpose of their placement along with their features is an objective of this research. This is mainly an explorative and qualitative research based upon the historical documents and monuments located at the site. Survey of site, collection of inscriptions, myths, legends, photography of images, interview with the concerned authorities and a review of related literature are the methodologies applied for the research. Through various references, it has been known in this article that the actual name of the deval of Rani Pokhari is Parameshwor Parameswori. King*

*Pratap Malla constructed the pond in swastika yantra or mandala design and established syaumya and raudra form of deities for the liberation and eternal peace of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla, to protect his spirit from wandering, disclosing the fault of tantric symbols engraved in coins and for the protection and welfare of his clan.*

**Keywords:** *Harishankari, Parameshwor Parameshwori, Swastika yantra, Vatuk Bhairav, Kichkanya.*

## **Introduction**

Rani Pokhari, along with *deval* and several images within its sanctum and the pond premise was constructed by King Pratap Malla of Kathmandu in the name of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla. Several monuments were established around Kathmandu valley by the kings of medieval period. Each monument expresses religious belief, devotion, the wish of salvation, a competition, enviousness with one's rivalry and also to decorate the city through marvelous craft. The gradual inclination of tantrism in religion since the 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> century, its secret application on ritualistic practice and its implementation on images evoked more sublimated images embellished with theme, style and mystery during medieval period. Although the art of Kathmandu valley had already gained its height for its simplicity during the Licchavi period. The deities established at *Mohankali hiti, Tusa hiti, Bhairav chowk* of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur royal palaces respectively are the best examples of Hindu images of medieval character adorned with tantrism. They not only reveal the passion of medieval kings for the establishment of images mingled with tantrism, but also their role of its execution. Pratap Malla established hundreds of monuments like *Guheshwori, Dakshinkali, Narashima, Kotilingeshwor* and many more associated with tantric rituals in the valley. He constructed Rani pokhari and adorned it with several images. What images are enshrined and how is the temple named? What images are established in and around the temple or pond premises and what is its link with a deceased son? What does the specific design of the pond and iconography reveal? These statements are identified as problems in this article and it has been focused upon to find out the relevancy and specific symbolism.

Making of a pond for religious and social purposes can be traced back to 800 B.C.-200 B.C. through the findings made during the excavation of a pond located in Kapilvastu (Nakamura and others, 2000, p.135). Ponds were made during Kiranta period by collecting rain water from ridges of hill of Kathmandu valley, in order to fulfill people's basic needs. Its extended form, ponds of Naxal: word Naxal is derived from *nawasagar* or nine ponds fed through *rajkulo* during the Licchavi period (Marahatta, B.S.2072, p.4), *hiti pokhari*: pokhari in front of Narayan *hiti* built by King Dharmadev (Bhattarai, B.S.2041, p.20), *Kamal pokhari*: built by Tularani, the legendary queen of king Narendradeva of Bhaktapur (UNESCO, 2008, p.9) are the early few examples of ponds of the valley. "River water or flowing water is a thousand times pious than the water of *tadaga* (pond) and making of

water resource is an act of charity”, says Atri Samhita (Joshi, B.S.2070. p.967). Following the religious literature and *vastusastra*, many ponds: *Jawalakhel pokhari* (Patan), *Guhya pokhari*, *Ta: pokhari*, *Nhu: pokhari* (Bhaktapur) were constructed by the medieval kings. King Pratap Malla constructed Rani *pokhari*, a pious pond, by adding water of holy rivers and *kundas* for the absolution of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla.

The origin of temple architecture can be traced back to 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C., through the finding of post holes at the excavation of Kapilvastu. Temples were known as *prasad*, *bhawan*, *devalaya*, *devakul* (*shivadevakul*, *matingdevkul*) (Bajracharya, B.S.2030, p.31,34,35,65,92,339) during the Licchavi period. Some stone architectures with short pillars and a flat roof slanted at four sides are found around Pashupatinath temple area. Except for these, earlier architectural remains are not in existence. Temples were known as *devgriha*, *math*, *deval*, *sadan*, *shivalaya*, *ratha*, *devagaar*, *ketan* etc during the medieval period (Regmi, 1966, IV. p. 8, 15, 26, 71, 79, 82, 96, 164). These temples were of various types; *shikhara* is one of them. It looks like the top of a mountain, and thus is named as *shikhara* and is also known as *granthakut*. Temple of Brahma made out of stone with various sculptures carved around at Pashupatinath temple, is the earliest and exemplary sample of *shikhara* or *granthakut* deval of 9<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Likewise, *shikhara* temple of contemporary period (smaller in size) of Brahma is found on the north eastern side of Pashupatinath temple with the shivalinga enshrined in it. In the inscription of *Narashima deval* of N.S.710 (1589 C.E.), Patan durbar, it has been named as *granthakut deval* (Bajracharya, B.S.2056, p.40). Mahaboudha temple of Patan, Pratappur, Anantapur of Swoyambhunath are a few examples of *granthakut* deval of the medieval period. Pratap Malla selected *granthakut* deval to establish the deities at the center of a pond.

## Methodology

This research is an explorative as well as a qualitative one, and is based upon medieval history. Thus, facts related to this research is qualitative as well as historical, relying upon the documents and monuments of medieval period. For this, the essential facts have been collected from primary and secondary sources. As a basic tool of primary source, multiple surveys of site has been conducted. For the identification of images and the reason for their specific placement, experts related to iconography, tantrism, and the pujari of the *deval* were interviewed. All the epigraphic records related to the monument adjacent at the site and preserved elsewhere were collected. Likewise, detail photography of all images and the collection of myths, legends related to the monuments were listed.

In the same way, as a secondary source, collection and review of related literature like books, *vamsavalis*, articles, journals, newspapers related to Rani pokhari and the texts, Puranas defining the *pratima lakshan* for iconography were reviewed. In this way, on the basis of above mentioned tools the actual naming of the *deval*, identification of images, specific

symbolism of pond and images and the king Pratap Malla's intention for its installation has been drawn.

This research is delimited within the Rani pokhari area. Monuments established at deval located at the center of pond, around its premise and the monuments within the boundary of pond have been focused. The monuments related to medieval period, especially associated with King Pratap Malla has been focused. Also, the monuments associated with Rani pokhari, which are preserved or collected outside have been considered.

## **Main findings**

The epigraphic records and historical documents published earlier about Rani pokhari provided a general vision towards its founder, the date of its construction and to whom it was dedicated. Yet, the designing of a pond, core theme and intention of images installed in and around have not been revealed yet. In this context, the finding of facts below helped in revealing the concrete theme about Rani pokhari, allowing to fill the gap.

### ***Nhu: Pukhu: The Rani Pokhari***

Chakravertendra Malla was the youngest son of king Pratap Malla. As per the suggestion of *Swami* Gyanananda, Pratap Malla declared his son the king of Kathmandu in N.S. 789 (1668 C.E.) and minted coins in his name. After a few days of his coronation, Chakravertendra died while he was playing with an elephant. It was assumed that the symbols (especially triangular *banastra*, bow and arrow) engraved in the coin caused his death (Lamsal, B.S.2023, p.89). A bow and arrow are ominous of death; later on those coins were used only for the speedy delivery of a child (Wright, 1972, p.220). Queen Anantapriya was inconsolable for the demise of her youngest born. Pratap Malla decided to construct a pond consulting *swami* Gyananda and several other sastras. The inscription dated N.S. 790 (1669 C.E.) *Aswin sukla Purnima* Monday of Rani pokhari premises describes that the pond was established in the name of Chakravertendra Malla (Rajvanshi, B.S.2027, p.101). During that time, it was famous as *Nhu: pukhu:* as it was a newly made pond. In the *Thyasafus* of N.S. 805 (1684 C.E.) (Regmi, 1966, III. 25) and N.S. 811 (1690 C.E.) (Tiwari, B.S.2040. p.25) the name of the pond has been mentioned as '*Nhurpukhuli*'. In *Bhasavamabali*, the pond is named *Nag Talau* (Lamsal, B.S. 2023, p.89). In the above mentioned inscription it has been described that water from fifty-one pious rivers, *kundas (tirthas)* of kingdoms including one thousand six hundred forty-one (*vari*) pots of water from Bagmati river, and famous *tirthas* of Varanasi, Vaidyanth of India were added to the Rani pokhari (Rajvamshi, B.S.2027, p.101). Stone spouts on the other hand, on four corners of the pond which existed during medieval period (*Tindhara* at north east, *bidhut pradhikaran hiti* at the south east, *Nehrahiti* at south west and *Jhangul thakku hiti* at north west) added a beauty to the pond along with its purpose as the source of water. King Pratap Malla spent a lot of money and put

in a lot of effort to make the pond pious and aesthetic. He had a wish that the pond be used only for pious purposes. Thus, he alluded in his inscription the *deva tarpan* or *pitri tarpan*, which if conducted in the pond is equivalent to the bath taken on the above mentioned *tirthas*, but committing any sins like digging the pond or its premises, or suicide in the pond would be considered a sin as entry into core forbidden places, eating of core forbidden food, killing of core Brahmans, cows, gurus, children, women respectively, destruction of shivalinga, as well as the destruction of Parameshwor Parameshwori that resides in the pond. Pratap Malla's another inscription of Madhav Narayan of N.S. 790 (1669 C.E.) in the Rani Pokhari premises compares Rani pokhari to *sansar ratnakar* or the gem of the world and having a bath or water of it would destroy heinous sins. It further explains that the great *yagnas* were performed after the completion of its construction so that it will forever be served by sages, gods and people (Bajracharya and Pantha, B.S.2018, p.25). In this way, the pond had its fame as *Nhu: pohku* during his reign but later on when Bhuvan Lakshmi, the wife of Bhupalendra Malla further completed new *sanskaras* of the pond, *Nhu:pukhu* slowly gained its popularity as Rani Pokhari (Regmi, B.S.2051. p.181). The addition of new ponds in Kathmandu valley later on eased the pupil to call it Rani pokhari.

### **The temple of Rani pokhari, its images and naming**

The *granthakut* styled temple was established at the center of the Rani pokhari. *Thansafu* explains that *Agnihotra sanskara* for the *pratistha* of *devala* was conducted on N.S.789 (1668 C.E.) *Magha sukla trayodasi*. Four days earlier, the *agni* was established (Purnima.V.137. p.51). It must be noted that, after the completion of Rani pokhari and the *deval*, King Pratap Malla set up an inscription in N.S.790 (1669 C.E.) *Aswin sukla Purnima*, so that the news of construction of a pious *tirtha* and *deval* be spread all over the country. Indeed, he inscribed the inscription in Devanagari script (Rajvanshi, B.S.2027, p.101). In the inscription of Madhav Narayan, it has been mentioned that the sins attempted in the pond would be a sin as comparable as the destruction of the shivalinga and the *deval* of Parameshwori. (Bajracharya, Pantha, B.S.2018, p. 25). This proves that he had established a *deval* for Parameshwori. Further detail about the *deval* has not been found. Father Desidery who visited Nepal during 1722 A.D. mentioned in his diary that there is a large pond outside the main city gate with a flight of steps and banks sloping down water; there is a tall column at the center resting on a magnificent pedestal (Regmi, B.S.2051. p.190). Likewise, the sketch of the *deval* was sketched by an artist of Wald mar in 1845A.D. It supports to prove that the *deval* was constructed in *granthakuta* style. These days, the stone slabs found at the four doors of *deval* provides evidence of its presence. Later on, Janga Bahadur Rana during 1851 A.D. rebuilt the *deval* in *gumbaja* style which was demolished by the earthquake of 1935 A.D. Juddha Samsher renovated it in a *gumbaja* style which was further demolished by the earthquake of 2015 A.D. It has been newly reconstructed in its original *granthakut* style in 2021 A.D.

Several images have been enshrined in the *deval*. Pratap Malla's inscription of N.S 790 (1669 C.E.) describes that the pond belonged to Parameshwor Parameshwori. Likewise, his another inscription of Madhav Narayan states that Kasi Vishwanath leaving Kashi had arrived to Rani Pokhari (Bajracharya, Pantha, B.S.2018, p. 25). Bhasa vamsabali on the other hand explains that Pratap Malla had established his *esta devata* inside the *deval* (Lamsal, B.S.2023.p.89), while Devmala vamsabali states that his *esta devata* along with Mahadev were established (Yogi, B.S.2013.p.60). As mentioned in above vamsabalas, Regmi supports Parameshwor Parameshwori along with an image of Balgopal (Regmi, B.S.2051.p.190). Triratna saundarya gatha explains that Bhimeshwor shivalinga was enshrined in the *deval* (Bajracharya, B.S.2019. p.256). Parameshwor, Kasi Vishwanth, Bhimeshwor as mentioned in above documents, clearly indicate to the shivalinga that is enshrined at the sanctum. Regarding Parameshwori; it must be an image of Harishankari placed at the northern niche of the shrine. The tradition of establishment of shivalinga in *panchayatana* form (Shivalina, Ganesh, Vishnu, Surya, Devi) can be traced back to the Licchavi period. There are several *panchayatana* temples in the valley including Pashupatinath temple. Likewise, *deval* of Rani pokhari is established in *panchayatana* form, having enshrined the following images:

**Shivalinga:** Shivalinga is the symbolism of male and female, the intangible form of composition of lord Shiva and Uma. There are various types of shivalingas; Niskala without face and Shakala with face(s), Sahasra with thousand faces etc. The *Niskala* shivalinga has been enshrined at the center of the *deval* of Rani pokhari. It has been established on circular *vedi* with snake motive around it. Above the *vedi* is the *beshar* styled *jalahari* with a slim part in between the upper and lower portion.

**Harishankari:** Image of Harishankari is place at the northern niche of the *deval*. Harishankari is the conjoint form of Lakshmi and Shankari (Gauri). Like in the image of Harihara, Hara consists of the right part and Hari the left, with their specific emblems. Here, in Harishankari image, Lakshmi has been engraved at the right side with six hands; carrying *chakra, shanka, gada, padma, vajra-ghanta, varada mudra* resting her right foot on garuda. The left one is Shankari (Gauri) with six hands; carrying *trishul, utpala, khatawanga, naramunda, damaru* and *avaya mudra* resting her left foot on couchant *nandi*. Harishankari is standing in *alidhasana*. Her six heads are crowned with three-peaked *mukut*; each houses three eyes. She wears *chakrakundala, sarpahara* and *mundamala*. It is one of the most marvelous images of the medieval art; and a rare masterpiece of Nepal.

**Garudasan Vishnu:** Garudasana Vishnu is placed at the north-eastern side of the *deval*. Vishnu mounted on his vehicle Garuda is known as Garudasan Vishnu. Vishnu being pleased with the courage of Garuda in bringing *Amritghata* (immortal nectar) from the devloka in order to freed his mother Vinita from the slavery of his step mother Kadru was appointed as his vehicle (Khanal, B.S. 2075. p: 85). The text instructs that Garuda Vishnu is to be mounted on his vehicle Garuda with his emblems. Garuda should have beak and legs

that resemble a kite, round eyes with four hands; carrying an umbrella, *amrita ghata* and two in *anjali mudra* (Rao, V.I, P.I.1997. p. 284). Here, Vishnu is seated on Garuda carrying *shanka, chakra, gada, padma*. Garuda has lifted his hands, stretched apart as if he is flying. On its two sides are the images of Lakshmi and Saraswati.

**Ganesh with Shakti:** Ganesh with his consort is placed at the south eastern corner of the *deval*. Ganesh the son of lord Shiva is worshiped first during the daily or special worship. Ganapati, as described in Puranas, is depicted with the head of an elephant. There are hundreds of image Ganesh around Kathmandu valley and almost in every *tole* of the town. He is depicted in a single or with his Shakti in several forms. Ganapati of red color is seated with his consort having ten hands, carrying *padma, puspa, anaar, kalash, gada*, broken *danta, ukhu* and *dhaan ko bala* has been described as Mahaganapati (Joshi, B.S.2040.p.16). Here, five headed Mahaganapati is seated on *nandi* with his shakti. He has ten hands which carry bowl of sweets, *chakra, mudgara, trisul, ankus, pasa, danta*, bowl of sweets, *parasu* and *alingan* of Shakti respectively. His Shakti is seated on *lalitasana* with four hands; two in *anjali mudra, avaya* and *alingan* of Ganapati.

**Surya with shakti:** The image of Surya with his shakti is placed at the south western corner of the *deval*. Surya which rises in the sky daily is worshiped as a powerful god since the beginning of civilization worldwide. He is worshiped as a god of light, wisdom, health directly or through an image. He is depicted in an image on a single wheeled chariot pulled by seven horses, with lotus flowers on two hands. There should be Dandi and Pingala to his right and left, and his wives Ragi and Nisprava flanking *chamar*. All the *dikpalas* should be at the eastern side of Surya (Agnipurana, B.S. 2060. P. 103). Here, Surya with his shakti is on chariot pulled by seven horses which is controlled by Arun. Surya has four hands; two carrying lotus flowers, *avaya* and *alingan* of shakti. His shakti is seated on his lap with four hands; two with flowers and two broken. Usha and Pratusa on their two sides are pointing arrows.

**Balgopals:** Two images of Balgopals are placed at the sanctum, both of similar size and iconographic features. Among various forms of lord Krishna like; Benugopal, Krishna with Rukmani and Satyabhama, Kaliyadaman, Radha Krishna etc. Balgopal is one of his childish forms which is often depicted crawling with a ball of butter or *laddu* in his hands. Here, both the Balgopals are crawling with *laddu* on their right hands.

The *deval* of Rani pokhari has several names. It is known as Balgopaleshwor, Yamaleshwor, Harishankari and Gaurishankar. The demarcation of Rani pokhari area is mentioned in his inscription of N.S. 790 (1669 C.E.) which explains the *Balmasanghat* at the eastern direction (Rajvanshi, B.S.2027, p.101), a burial site for deceased children. It is believed that the image of Balgopal was enshrined at *deval* for the salvation of deceased children, after which it got its name as Balgopaleshwor. It is also known as Yamaleshwor

*deval*. Kasi Nath Tamot presents his view that Pratap Malla constructed the pond at Jamal *Khwata* (field) and enshrined shivalinga. As it is established at Jamal area, the *deval* was known as Jamaleshwor and later on Yamaleshwor, as *Ja* and *Ya* are pronounced synonymously. The word Yamal in tantrism signifies the conjugal, twins or *yugal* form of gods or goddesses. "As the image of Harishankari is installed in a *raudra yamal* form, it might have been named as Yamaleshwor and later on should have gained its fame as Yamaleshwor *deval*," says tantra expert Madhav Lamichhane. It is also known as Harishankari *deval*, after an image of Harishankari. Likewise, in the *lalmohar* of 1871 B.S. (1818 C.E.) registered at *guthi adda* of Bhadrakali, the *deval* of Rani pokhari is named as Gaurishankar *devalaya*. Gaurishankar represents Uma Maheshwor. Since the image of Uma Maheswor is not present, it might have been dedicated to Harishankari and shivalinga.

### The images of temple premise

At four corners of the premises of the *deval*, small four *devals* in *gumbaja* style are enshrined with marvelous terracotta images. Through the description of the tall column at the center of the pond for the main *deval* by Father Desidary in 1722 A.D. (Regmi, B.S.2051.p.190) and the sketch of the single *deval* by an artist of Wald mar of 1845 A.D. it can be assumed that there was only a presence of single *deval* during that time. On the other hand, *deval* of *gumbaja* architecture is the origination of Shah period. Likewise, terracotta images now being enshrined at the small *devals*, it no doubt reveals the prominent features and theme of medieval tantric art. From these facts, it can be assumed that the images were established by Pratap Malla earlier, for which Juddha Samser might have built *gumbaja devals* while renovating the main *deval* after the earthquake of 1934 A.D.

Terracotta art has been famous in Nepal since an early age. With the gradual changes in its characteristics since early times until the medieval period, it adopted its theme within. Terracotta arts during medieval period were established for various purposes. Images prepared through baking process were mainly used for *abhicharik* purpose (Rao, 1997. V.II. P.I.p.76). Outside the main temple premises of the pond, terracotta images are placed at four corners in a *swastika mandala* design facing specific directions as four ends of swastika. The images are as follows:

**Mahakali:** The image of Mahakali is placed at the south eastern shrine facing towards the west. In order to kill Madhu and Kaitava, Brahma meditated in devotion of goddess Mahakali. She had ten heads, ten feet and ten hands; each carrying *khadga*, *chakra*, *gada*, *bana*, *dhanus*, *paridha*, *sul*, *bhusundi*, *shanka* and *mastak* respectively (Vasista, B.S. 2057 p. 168). Here, Mahakali is standing in *birasana* on a lotus. She has ten heads adorned with *mukuta* with third eye in each face, ten legs, ten hands each carrying *khadga*, *bana*, *gada*, *trisul*, *khetaka*, *dhanu*, *pasa*, *parasu* with *trishul* and front main hands carrying *shanka* and *munda* as explained in purana. She is adorned with ornaments of snakes and *mundamala*.



**Nataraj:** The image of Nataraj is placed at south western shrine facing towards the north. According to Silparatna, the image of dancing Shiva should have *prabhamandal* resembling the sun. Purvakaranyagama states that his eyes should resemble the shape of *kurari* bird, and there should be *nakrakundala* and *patrakundala* in his right and left ears respectively, he should wear the skin of a tiger, should hold *agni* with three flames in his left hand. He should be on *apasmarapurush* and have three bends in his body (Rao,1997, V.II.P.I.p 228-229). Here Nataraj Shiva is dancing, resting his left foot on *kapalpatra* and raising his right foot. Dancing of shiva on *nandi* is the symbol of creation while on *kapal patra* is that of destruction. He has eighteen hands; carrying *bajra ghanta, khadga, trisul, mudgara, gada, padma, varada, damaru, vajra, khatawanga*, serpent, blue lotus, *shanka, pasa, ankus, khetaka* and his principal pair of hands *kapal patra* and *bindu mudra*. His *jatamukut* is flanked by flags which are usually associated with goddesses of medieval art. He wears *nakrakundala, patrakundala*, necklace and *mundamala* and has a third eye on his forehead.

**Mahagauri:** The image of Mahagauri is placed at north western shrine facing towards the east. Gauri is the consort of lord Shiva. Gauri should have four hands carrying *akshamala, padma, kamandalu and abhaya*. It is understood to be the aspect in which devas contemplates upon her (Rao, 1779.V.I.P.II.360). Here, Mahagauri is shown in *raudra* form; thus should be contemplated as a shakti of Mahashiva. She is standing on a corpse in *alidasana*, has three heads, six hands; carrying *khadga, trisul, katri, khetaka, darpan, kapalpatra*. She is adorned with *jatamukura, kundala*, necklace and *mundamala*. She is flanked by a parrot and a vulture on each side.

**Bhairavbhairavi:** The image of Bhairavbahiravi is placed at the north eastern shrine facing towards the south. Bhairav is the fierce form of lord Shiva, which is often depicted in a *raudra* or a fierce look. Bhairav should have a floppy belly, round yellowish eyes, complexion like a dark cloud, wide nostrils, garland of skulls, ornaments of snakes, several weapons and is supposed to be frightening Parvati with a snake according to Vishnudharmottarpurana (Rao,1997 V.II.P.I. p.177). Bhairavi, the consort of Bhairav should be having a red complexion and hold *pasa* and *ankusha* (Rao, 1997.V.I.P.II. p.366). Here, Bhairav is standing on *nagasana* in *alidasan* posture with his shakti Bhairavi. He is adorned with ornaments of snakes and *mundamala*. He has terrific bulging eyes with a third eye on his forehead and four hands; carrying *khadga, varada, vajra ghanta* and *alingan* of bhairavi on his waist with blue lotus. Bhairavi is with two hands; *varada* and *abhaya*.

Except these images, there are more than a dozens of terracotta images representing *Nagas, Nagkanyas*, Garuda, Varaha Vishnu, Narshima Vishnu and Vaikuntha Vishnu at the western wall of the premise. The images of *Nagas* and *Nagkanyas* represent their relation to pious water of the pond and might have been placed as *astha nagas* with their shaktis in their abode place.

## Images at the four corners of Rani Pokhari

At the four corners of the extended Rani pokhari premises, four *devals* are enshrined with images. Father Desidary had mentioned in this diary that within around two miles of a circular diameter around Rani Pokhari, there are many temples (Regmi, B.S.2051.p.190). This proves that the images were enshrined along with *deval* during the reign of Pratap Malla. Like the images of small *devals* around the main *deval* premise, these images have also been placed in a swastika mandala design each facing specific directions. The images are as follows:

**Durga:** The image of Durga is placed at the south eastern boundary of pond facing towards the west. Durga, the sister of lord Vishnu is originated from *adhishakti*. She should have dark complexion, eight hands; each carrying *shanka, sul, dhanus, bana, khanga, khetak, pasa* and mounted on either lion or *padmasana* according to Supravedagam. Here, Durga has four hands; carrying *pasa, parasu, halo and kapalpatra*. She is adorned with *mukut* flanked by two flags, the common features of medieval art, *kundalas* and *mundamala*. She is standing on *pratyalidasana* resting her right foot on *padma* and left on a lion.

**Ganesh with Shakti:** Ganesh with shakti is placed at the south western boundary of pond facing towards north. The image is famous as *sorahate* ganesh within the city. Ganesh is standing on *alidhasana* resting his feet on a mouse; his vehicle. He is hooted by the fangs of twelve serpents. He has sixteen hands; carrying *khadga, trisul, parasu, damaru, chakra, akshaya mala, varad*, radish with *abhaya mudra*, broken weapon, *khatawanga, pasa, vajraghanta, pustak, kumba* and emrassing shakti on her waist with *modaka patra*. He wears necklace, *yagyopabita* of serpant and a long garland of flower. Siddhi should be covered with *chandana*, seated upon white lotus and decorated with lotus (Rao, 1997.V.I.P.II.p.367). As the Shakti of Ganesh is standing on lotus pedestal with *varada, abhaya mudra* with a long garland of lotus, it can be assumed that his shakti is Siddhi.

**Vatuk Bhairav:** The image of Vatuk Bhairav is placed at the north eastern boundary of the pond facing towards the south. Vatuk Bhairab is the childish form of *raudra* shiva or a Bhairav. It is believed that Vatuk Bhairab was established in reminiscence of Chakravertendra Malla. Vatuk Bhairav should have eight arms each carrying *khatawanga, pas, sula, damaru, kapalapatra, snake, asi, and varada mudra* respectively. There should be a dog by his side or as his *vahana*. "He should be stark naked and surrounded on all sides by a host of demons," says Roopamandana (Shreevastav,1996. p.82). Here, Vatuk Bhairav has been shown with bulging eyes, wide nostrils, open mouth adorned with an ornaments of snakes and *mudnamala*. He has four hands; carrying *damaru, khadga, katawanga* and *kapalpatra*. Vatuk Bhairav is in *alidhasan* posture resting his right foot on a dog as instructed in *vidhana* and his left on *padmasana*.

**Bhairav:** The image of Bhairav is placed at the north western boundary of the pond facing towards the east. Bahirav is standing on a corpse in *alidhansan* posture. He has erect hair, bulging eyes, wide nostrils with a mild smile and *kundalas* of *nagas*. He has eight hands; each carrying *ankush*, *damaru*, *khadga*, *trishul*, *pasa*, *vajra-ghanta*, *kapalpatra* and *abhaya mudra* respectively.

### **The Image of Madhav Narayan**

The image of Madhav Narayan is established at the northern bank of Rani Pokhari. It was established by Pratap Malla in N.S.790 (1669 C.E.) *Magh sukla Purnima* in the name of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla after completing *Magha vrata* (Bajracharya and Pantha, B.S.2018, p.25). The accomplishment of *Magh vrata* by Pratap Malla signifies the worship of Madhav Narayan or Harihara which had gained utmost fame as well as faith during the medieval period. Harihara or Harishankari is worshiped as the consort of Shiva during the *Magh vrata*. Here, as a *purush* of Harishankari, Mahav Narayan is established with other forms of Vishnu at both sides. The rotation of four emblems of lord Vishnu in four hands makes Chaturvimshati forms of Vishnu each having a specific name. Among his twenty-four forms, Madhav is the one, which carries *gada*, *chakra*, *shanka*, *padma* in a clock wise form from his lower right hand (Shreevastav, 1996.p.134). Tradition of establishing twelve images of Vishnu as a representation of Chaturvimsati along with one principal image at the center has been popular since an early medieval period. Here, an image of Madhav Narayan is placed at the center of the stele with *gada*, *chakra*, *sankha*, *padma* in his four hands as specified by Roopmandana, while his twelve other forms are placed on a separate stele to his right and left in smaller sizes. Madhav Narayan is adorned with *kirit mukut*, *har*, *kundala*, *keyur* and is flanked by Lakshmi and Saraswoti.

### **The elephant of Rani Pokhari**

There is a huge figure of an elephant at the southern bank of Rani pokhari along with the statues of royal personalities. Though the eroded script does not give clarification about the date of its establishment yet, it has come into recognition from inscriptions that the riders are Pratap Malla and his two sons Chakravertendra Malla and Mahipatendra Malla. A shivalinga was also established along with it (Bajracharya and Pantha, B.S.2018, p.26). There is an interesting legend related to the elephant and the figure that has been carried along with its trunk. King Pratap Malla visited Rani pokhari daily in order to take a bath and worship the deities established around. With time, his health gradually declined. Vaidyas, astrologers and *tantrics* were consulted but they failed to find out the mystery of his illness. When looked into properly, it was discovered that the king was in deep affair with a *kichkanya* that resided near the pond, and he made her pregnant. During the reign of Pratap Malla, a large numbers of Indian Muslims had arrived in Nepal who were experts in shamanistic treatment, and were also good in the trade of cosmetics and making of arms and

ammunitions (Acharya, 2020, p.35). As per the suggestion of tantric, an expert *maulavi* was searched for. The *maulavi* then brought the *kinchkanya* into his control, took the embryo out of her womb and made the elephant press it through its trunk and make it go beneath the earth. It is believed that Pratap Malla, being pleased with *maulavi*/muslims, granted the land of *Balmasanghat*, the eastern part of Rani pokhari in order to make a Jame masjid for them. Citing several references of scholars, Acharya states that the land granted by Pratap Malla close to Rani pokhari is the one upon which they established an earlier structure of Jame Masjid (Acharya, 2020, p.35). This statement helps to support the authenticity of legend.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Pratap Malla constructed *Nhu: pokhu* in the name of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla, which later on was named as Rani pokhari. It was built in a *Yantrakar* or *Mandala* form with double series of *swastik yantras* after consulting *swami* Gyananada and various *sastras* of *tantra* and *vastu*. The *deval* of Rani pokhari has been named as Harishankari, Yamaleshwor, Balgopaleshwor and Gaurishankar in reference to the images, the name of its location and the documents of *guthi*. However, it has been clearly mentioned in Pratap Malla's inscriptions of N.S.790 (1669 C.E.) as Parameshwor Parameshwori intended towards the *raudra yamal* form of goddesses Vishnu and Shiva, the Harishankari. Thus, the actual name of the *deval* is Parameshwor Parameshwori.

The establishment of *esta devi*, shivalinga along with *saumya* deities Garudasan vishnu, Surya in a *panchayatana* form by King Pratap Malla at the center of a main *deval*, and the image of Madhav Narayan at the premises of the pond after completing *Magh vrata* reveals his endeavor to liberate the deceased soul of his son Chakravertendra Malla.

*Swastika yantra* in tantrism is a symbol of peace and prosperity (*santi and swasti*). The double layers of *swastika yantras* in *Yantrakar* or *mandala* form, designed to place the gods at the pond, stipulates the eternal peace desired by King Pratap Malla for his deceased son Chakravertendra's soul. The placement of the images of Shiva and Shakti and their family deities, all in *raudra* form at the end of swastikas facing specific directions with *mundamala*, dancing on *kapal patra* (symbol of *samhara*) and powerful emblems reveals his attempt to disclose the fault of symbols engraved on the coin that caused the death of his son, as well as his deep intent of releasing the spirit of his son from wandering. The coins of Chakravertendra with *vanastra*, bow and arrow were used afterwards for the speedy delivery of a child. This proves the power of tantric symbolism, and also its implementation. Pratap Malla's establishment of several monuments associated with tantric rituals of Kathmandu valley proves his eagerness for the execution of *tantra* for various endeavors. Rani pokhari was established with images like Harishankari, Surya with his consort, Ganesh with his consort, Mahakali, Nataraj, Mahagauri, Bhairavbhairavi, Durga, Ganesh with Siddhi, Bhairav, Batuk Bhairav, all adorned with powerful emblems and mingled with tantrism,

signifies the king's deep devotion towards *raudra* deities for the protection and welfare of his clan. Installation of the image of Balgopal at the sanctum of main *deval* for the salvation of deceased children buried nearby, an elephant subsiding an object with its trunk at the southern (direction of *yama*) bank of the Rani pokhari and *kichkanya's* assassination by *maulavi* proves the shamanistic cultural tradition and privilege given to it by the kings for its practices and passion.

In this way, from the above discussed facts, it can be concluded that the original name of Rani pokhari is *Nhu: pokhari* and the actual name of the *deval* is Parameshwor Parameswori. Pratap Malla constructed the pond in *swastika yantra* or *mandala* form and established *syaumya* and many *raudra* form of deities for the liberation and eternal peace of his deceased son Chakravertendra Malla and to release his spirit from wandering, also disclosing the fault of symbols engraved in the coin and for the protection and welfare of his clan hoping for no mishaps to happen in the future.

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Shivalinga (Parameshwor) main *deval*



Harishankari (Parameshwori) main *deval*



Mahakali of sub *deval* (southeast)



Nataraj of sub *deval* (southwest)



Mahaguari of sub *deval* (northwest)



Bhairavbhairavi of sub *deval* (northeast)



Durga (southeast of pond)



Ganesh with Shakti (southwest of pond)



Bhairav (northwest of pond)



Vatuk Bhairav (Northeast of pond).