

## Ancient Secrets of Nyerma – the Nunnery

A gentle walk through the rocky moraine, passing the periphery of an 11<sup>th</sup> Century Buddhist University, this trail is surmounted by a series of 108 ancient *chorten* ruins, erected in the bygone days. You would soon be entering the green farmlands of Nyerma, where the trail now turns into a beaten pathway, leading you to the nunnery nearby.

Enroute, on a tiny hillock is an abandoned ruin of a small fort. Oral history passed on from village elders suggests that it belonged to a *Cho*, (tax collector with several villages under his vigilance on behalf of the king). The walk continues past quaint local houses and lush barley and alfalfa fields.

The nunnery at Nyerma houses a school for the community of Buddhist nuns. 25 nuns, some as old as 80 and some as young as 11 years old from different parts of Ladakh live here as a community and spend time meditating, chanting prayers and learning Buddhist philosophy. The young ones are also taught English, science and math.

Located within the precincts of the rich ancient temple complex from the 11th century, ruined evidences suggest of an ancient regional learning centre for Buddhist philosophical studies. We suggest you take a peek into the innards of the stupas which house some very special Buddhist paintings of a bygone era.

**EXCURSION TYPE:** A guided walk giving you a perfect introduction to the Ladakhi way of life and techniques of high altitude farming, ending at the nunnery situated at the site of an ancient university.

- **DURATION OF ACTIVITY:** 01 hour 30 minutes.
- **DISTANCE FROM CAMP:** 02 kms.
- **ALTITUDE:** 3600 m. (11,880 ft)

**PHYSICAL RATING:** Easy to moderate.

**MINIMUM AGE:** Not Applicable.

**SEASON:** Mid May to early October.

**TRAVEL NOTE:**

- Wear comfortable walking shoes.
- Carry a light jacket or jumper.