

## NAKO TEMPLE COMPLEX

The following information is taken from: <http://www.univie.ac.at/itba/pages/sites/Nako.html>

The village of Nako lies at an altitude of 3625 metres, high above the last stretch of the Spiti valley. Today the village has a population of 416 people and is comparatively poor, as only those families who have apple orchards at lower locations can participate in the trade which has otherwise brought prosperity to the region. The village is reached by a 7 km link from the road connecting Spiti to Kinnaur; politically the region around Nako is still part of Kinnaur.

Nako was once a very important centre of Buddhism in the region. There are at least seven temples of different periods distributed all over the village, including a monastic complex on its western edge. Boasting four temples and a number of additional buildings, this complex preserves the earliest artistic heritage. The austere and unornamented exteriors of the buildings give little hint of the important artistic and religious legacy that lies within these walls.

The two oldest temples inside the monastic complex are the [Main Temple](#) and the [Upper Temple](#). These two temples preserve a considerable amount of their original decoration of clay sculptures, murals and ceiling panels. A third structure, the Small White Temple (dKar-chung lha-khang), preserves a once-marvellous wooden door-frame with scenes of the Life of the Buddha carved on the lintel. Today it is in a deplorable state, and it is also unclear whether its present location is original. The fourth structure of a similar size to the Upper Temple and just to the side of it is today somewhat confusingly called the Temple of Wide Proportions (rGya-dpag-pa'i lHa-khang).

The [Main Temple](#) and the [Upper Temple](#) may both be attributed to the first half of the 12th century, linking the earlier Purang-Guge monuments, such as [Tabo](#), with the later foundations of the [Alchi](#) group.

Nako has already been visited and described by the renowned scholars A.H. Francke and Giuseppe Tucci in the first decades of the 20th century. However, only in recent years has this village and its cultural heritage again received scholarly attention and is discussed in overview studies (di Mattia 1998; Thakur 1996) or such concentrating on specific aspects of Buddhist art in the western Himalayas as preserved at Nako.

### Literature

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लौता-वई-लारख-गोड्या  
LOTS. JAHN LAKHAN GORNA



लोचा-वड-लारवड गोडमा

LOTSI-BAHI-LHAKHAN GOŃMA





















































ग्या-पग-पह-लख्तान  
GYA-PAG-PAHI-LHAKHAN

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