

Phüntsook Chöling Visitor's FAQ

Travel, Directions, Accommodations, Dining, and Events

Phüntsook Chöling
45640 Highway 72
Ward, Colorado
(303) 459-0184
events@mangalashribhuti.org

Phüntsook Chöling is located north-east of Boulder, Colorado, along the scenic Peak to Peak Highway near the continental divide in the stunning Rocky Mountains. It is about a 45-minute drive from either Boulder or Longmont and roughly two hours from Denver. There is no cell phone service within a 10-mile radius of the center.

EVENTS FAQ

Where do I stay?

There are no accommodations at Phüntsook Chöling itself. For a list of accommodations in the area, see the Accommodations section below.

How much walking should I expect to do?

The parking area is a few hundred feet from the main shrine hall. The terrain is rocky and the elevation is over 9000 feet. There are steep stairs and gravel pathways. Sturdy walking shoes are essential in the summer and snow boots with good grip are best for the winter. The outhouses are along a dirt pathway 50-feet from the shrine room or shrine tent in the summer.

What if I have special needs such as limited mobility or hearing impairment?

Phüntsook Chöling is accessible to individuals with mobility impairments or other disabilities. Please contact us if you have any special needs, regarding any questions or concerns you might have.

Can I bring my cell phone or laptop?

Yes, but there is no cell reception within a 10-mile radius of Phüntsook Chöling, and we do not offer internet access. A landline is available for emergencies only.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

From Boulder:

From Boulder, take Broadway north (after the Holiday Inn) turn left onto Lee Hill Drive. After 1.3 miles at Lee Hill Road you have a choice to continue going straight or take a sharp, hairpin left turn. Take the sharp left and follow the steep, winding road (4.4 miles) up and over the hill until it dead ends into Left Hand Canyon Drive.

Turn left onto Left Hand Canyon Drive (Hwy 106) and continue following that road for almost 10 miles. As you follow that road, Left Hand Canyon Drive automatically becomes Indiana Gulch Road, then Utica St. It passes through the town of Ward (drive slowly! 15 mph) and then continues upward through a short steep winding part (same road, but technically this part of it is named Nelson Street). When you reach the Stop sign with the major intersection, turn Right onto the Peak to Peak Highway (Hwy 72) and drive north (towards Estes Park).

Very shortly after turning right, you will pass a small restaurant on the left called the Millsite Inn, from here it is approximately one mile until you see a little valley with houses and a barn to your right. (Total of 1.5 miles on Peak to Peak Highway). Once you see the 50 MPH sign, slow down. You will see the mail box number 45640. Turn right onto the dirt road that passes between the Barn and the House (do not enter the driveway to the house or to the barn).

Drive extremely slowly (5 mph) and carefully on this dirt road (even if you're late!). Stay right at the fork and continue to the end of the road -- past the parked cars on your left, past the stairway -- to the cul-de-sac, which is the only place to safely turn your car around. Don't park in the cul-de-sac, but rather, do a three point turn around, then drive back up the road you just came down and park in an available space among the other cars.

NOTE: It is very important to follow these directions and go to the end of the road to turn your car around before parking. Otherwise, it creates a huge, sometimes dangerous, traffic jam as people are trying to leave at the end of a program.

Walk to the stairway and go up the stairs. Walk past the first house (cabin) on your right. The second building is the main center and is where registration, check-in and further details are available.

Alternate route from Boulder:

You can also take Canyon Blvd. west from Boulder into the mountains. When Canyon Blvd. reaches a four way roundabout in Nederland, continue straight ahead (by going half way around the roundabout). That road automatically becomes the Peak to Peak Highway. Keep following that Peak to Peak Highway towards Estes Park, It is approximately 20 miles until you pass the Millsite Inn. See the directions above for how to continue to the center from there.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Traveling by Air

Denver International Airport (DIA)

Traveling to Boulder by Bus RTD:

www.rtd-denver.com

Route AB goes from DIA to Boulder.

ACCOMODATIONS

Phüntsook Chöling has no accommodations, but there are various places to stay in the area. A number of towns, from 15 to 45 minutes away, offer accommodations. Nederland is the closest and both Boulder and Longmont offer a variety of hotel and motel options.

Visit our NSS accommodations page here for more details:
<http://www.mangalashribhuti.org/nss-accommodations-list>

If you need more support sorting out accommodations, please contact our Hospitality Coordinator, Wassilissa. hospitality_pc@mangalashribhuti.org

Nederland is a small community about 20 minutes from Phüntsok Chöling. Lodging information can be found at www.nederlandchamber.org.

Camping

Due to the delicate nature of the environment, camping is not permitted at Phüntsok Chöling. This includes campers, RVs and car camping. However, we are located near the Roosevelt National Forest which offers campgrounds. Campsites may be reserved from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Reservations can be made at www.recreation.gov. Some campsites are available on a first-come, first served basis. Information on the following campgrounds as well as National Forest rules and regulations and fire restrictions can be found at www.fs.fed.us/arnf.

- Peaceful Valley Campground (off Colorado Highway 72 at mile-marker 50, approximately 19 miles north of Nederland); <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/recreation/camping-picnicking/developed/brd/peacefulvalley.shtml>
- Pawnee Campground (off of Colorado Highway 72 at Brainard Lake Road (aka Country Road 102, Forest Service Road 112), just north of Ward; <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/recreation/camping-picnicking/developed/brd/pawnee.shtml>
- Kelly Dahl Campground (Colorado Highway 119 at mile-marker 22, about 4 miles south of Nederland and 2 miles north of Rollinsville)
- Camp Dick Campground (one mile west of Colorado Highway 72, at mile-marker 50, approximately 19 miles north of Nederland and 20 miles south of Estes Park); <http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/recreation/camping-picnicking/developed/brd/campdick.shtml>

DINING

Participants may bring prepared lunches in an insulated lunch sack bag or may purchase lunch from our Lotus Café (\$8-14/per lunch). A coffee and tea station is provided for participants.

ENVIRONMENT/ WEATHER

The fair weather in the Boulder area is one of its attractions—often mild, sunny and dry throughout the year. Though we're only forty-five minutes from Boulder, the mountain weather at Phüntsook Chöling is much less predictable, because of the dramatic elevation change. This is likely to produce a much greater variability in temperature (especially at night), and in precipitation. Although the last few years have been technically a drought period, rain or an afternoon thunderstorm are frequent possibilities during the summer, and snow is likely anywhere from September through April. Nights and early mornings can be chilly at any time of year at Phüntsook Chöling, so it's always useful to have something warm for layering. The sun can be intense at all times of the year, and, at higher elevations, because the atmosphere is thinned, sunscreen protection is especially important.

The altitude at Phüntsook Chöling is roughly 9,000 feet. For comparison, Boulder is 5,430 feet and Denver is 5,280 feet. If you live at a location near sea level (e.g. Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, St. Louis), you are likely to experience some noticeable physical effects from the higher elevation. Please expect these, so you won't be overly concerned. Most people will have some shortness of breath, especially with any exertion (climbing stairs; carrying luggage); and some people report feeling headaches or upset stomach for the first day or two after arriving. Sleeping may also be fitful or interrupted. The acclimation period varies from one person to the next, but for most people, their discomfort is limited to the first 36 hours, though you still may get winded easily for much longer. Some travelers may prefer to spend an extra day or two in Denver or Boulder in order to make the transition more smoothly. Many of the effects of altitude change are due to relative dehydration because of the drier climate and the body's adjustment mechanisms. Please keep in mind that much of the acclimation process can be accelerated by drinking plenty of water—more than you may be accustomed to drinking. In fact, some travelers avert much of the initial discomfort by drinking plenty of water prior to and during the day of travel, and arrive very well-hydrated.

WHAT TO BRING

- Notebook, pens
- Personal water bottle
- Food for lunch, snacks
- Sunglasses, sunhat, sunscreen, insect repellent
- Clothing that you can layer (average summer temperatures are between 43-86° F, average winter temperatures 11-37° F)
- Shawl/blanket (cool in mornings/evenings)
- Rain poncho/small folding umbrella
- Katag (prayer scarf) and envelope for final day's teacher offering
- Walking shoes or sandals that can easily be taken on and off (shoes are not permitted in the shrine room)
- Meditation cushions are provided, but if you would like to bring your own, please do.

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Pets
- Firearms or other weapons
- Illegal drugs/alcohol

CHILDCARE

Limited childcare is available for the programs at Phüntsook Chöling. Please contact the Events Coordinator at events@mangalashribhuti.org in advance of the program for further information. It is preferable to make childcare requests at least one month in advance.

TEACHING OFFERING

At the end of the program, participants have an opportunity to make a teaching offering to Rinpoche as an expression of gratitude for receiving the teachings. Such monetary offerings made to the Teacher are reflections of the students' generosity and appreciation, and are made according to each one's capacity and inspiration. Rinpoche uses these offerings to contribute to a number of worthy Dharma projects for which he provides material support. Offerings are used expressly for this purpose and are not used for personal expenses or for the ongoing support of MSB. If you wish to designate a contribution that will fund Rinpoche's living expenses please specify "Parsonage Fund" on the memo portion of your check. (For more information about the parsonage fund, please visit our website.)

SHRINE ROOM ETTIQUETTE

In the summer, teachings are held outdoors in our large shrine tent. During other programs, teaching and practice are held indoors in the center's shrine room. A shrine room is a sacred space in which we connect with the Three Jewels (the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha), hear the teachings and ultimately connect with our own enlightened nature. The following are guidelines that help us remain mindful and respectful of the precious opportunity we have to hear the teachings and study and practice the Dharma.

- Please remove your shoes before entering the shrine room and place them on the designated shoe racks. Personal belongings (lunches, backpacks, coats, etc.) also should be left in the designated area.
- When entering and leaving the shrine room it is customary to offer a gesture of respect. This can be done by placing your palms together at your heart and bowing slightly.
- Conversation should be kept to a minimum in and around the shrine room. During breaks and lunch, people often practice or study in the shrine room.
- Turn off all cell phones and watch alarms.
- Dress appropriately. Revealing clothing such as halter tops and shorts are not appropriate attire. Hats should be removed before entering the shrine room.
- Chant books, texts, liturgies, sacred images should be treated with respect. Do not place them directly on the floor or step over them.
- It is considered disrespectful to point one's feet at the shrine, a sacred image, or towards the teacher. Likewise, one never lies down in the shrine

room. During long teachings, one can become uncomfortable. It is okay to adjust your posture, but not go into a complete slouch, recline or point your legs at the shrine or Rinpoche.

- When Rinpoche enters or leaves the shrine room, one should stand with one's palms together at one's heart and with head bent respectively.
- After Rinpoche is seated, it is customary to offer three prostrations to show respect. The teacher embodies the essence of all Buddhas throughout the three times. He is the union of the Three Jewels: his body is the Sangha, his speech the Dharma, his mind the Buddha—from Patrul Rinpoche's Words of My Perfect Teacher.
- Please remain in the shrine room during meditation/practice sessions and talks. Please do not enter the shrine room once meditation has begun. You may sit quietly in the post-meditation area until the session has ended. Should you need to leave during a session, please do so quietly so as not to disturb others.
- Please hold questions until the teaching is completed. Rinpoche usually allows ample time for questions and answers and will invite questions.
- When the teaching/practice session is over, please let Rinpoche leave the shrine room first. After Rinpoche leaves, please wait until the person making announcements finishes before leaving.

RECORDINGS

All our programs are recorded. We offer a special, program-only, highly discounted set of MP3s at each teaching, in order to encourage study and contemplation of the teachings in one's daily life. You may order these during registration as part of your program cost, or during the program when an announcement is made about this offer.

FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have specific needs or questions that have not been answered in these information pages, please contact the Events Coordinator (events@mangalashribhuti.org).