

International Buddhist Sangha of Niagara Falls is a group of Theravada Buddhists from all over the world. Theravada is one of the original schools of Buddhism, meaning “The School of Elders”, Thera meaning “elders.” The teachings follow the original disciples of the Buddha and the Pali Canon. It is said Pali was the language spoken in the time of the Buddha.

The Buddha was born as Prince Siddhattha Gotama and was predicted to become either a great ruler or the Buddha, one ascetic predicted only the outcome of becoming Buddha. Growing up he lived the typical life of a Prince, but was kept sheltered and had private tutors. One day he wandered and saw a sick man, an old man, a dead man and a holy man or monk and thought there must be more to life than this and left at the age of 27 to pursue freedom from suffering. At the age of 35 Buddha obtained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree of what is now Bodhi Gaya, India and spent the next 45 years teaching this truth, or Dhamma to others and established a Sangha or community of teachers to carry on after his passing.

The Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha became known as *Tiratana* or Triple Gem because they are valuable jewels or treasures, something the world admires, and bring great delight to the hearts. Together they help guide others to wholesome peace of mind.

Any school one turns to is based off the Four Noble Truths

1. Dukkha: there is suffering
2. Dukkha samudaya: the cause of suffering
3. Dukkha nirodha: the cessation of suffering
4. Dukkha nirodha gamini patipada- path of practice/ Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path is a Middle Way between extreme desire and self-mortification which at the time was common among ascetics to practice extreme measures to obtain enlightenment. The path includes developing an understanding of the world around us and gently guides us to develop morality, wisdom and concentration. According to the Buddha everything is based on cause and effect, or kamma, and the Noble Eightfold Path can help us find inner peace and balance in our daily lives.

Even if one does not become Buddhist, the practice of meditation and teachings of the Dhamma have helped people all over the world find inner calmness.