

partial transcript of

Buddha Realms – Permanent Change: Part Two

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NARR

In San Quentin Prison, California, inmates are walking the Buddhist path. Even here, on the edges of the affluent West, Buddhism is staking a claim and finding acceptance. But what is the attraction to this twenty five hundred year old tradition, for men who are "in for life?"

Vince Russo

Inmate

I found a little more calm although maybe I'm just more aware that I suffer more, or what the problems are, so I try to be a little more mindful. And if I meditate early in the morning get up a about 3 in the morning and meditate for an hour, when I start off the day I see the negativity around me and I try to be a little more positive just be a little more different.

Carl Irons

Inmate

For several years I've struggled with becoming a more mellow person, I killed a man a little more than seventeen years ago. And that made me realise how I lost control of my life, so it's been a constant struggle since then to become the person I was thirty years ago when I was a draft resister a pacifist, yeah.

Ron Singler

Inmate

I believe it is very well suited to prison life many of us are searching for things avenues of escape because you are trapped in this environment and Buddhism gives you a method of escaping by getting deep into yourself through meditation, through twice daily practice.

NARR

Seido Lee de Barros has been a Zen Buddhist priest for 30 years. He is part of an organised movement to bring Buddhism in to the prisons of North America. Every Sunday, for 2 years, Seido Lee has led a dozen inmates in the Buddhist practice of meditation, chanting, and discussion of the dharma, the teachings of the Buddha.

Seido Lee de Barros

Green Gulch Farm, California

The first day the room was full of people. Some of them were curious, you know, what's new? When you're in prison, specially for life, you know, anything new that comes down the pike you kind of want to check it out and ah, so a lot of people came. At first I did everything, but now they do everything. They set up the zendo, they offer, help me offer incense, they construct the necessary altars and cushions and things - they're very self-starter, you know, they create the environment.

And it's a little secret, but when other people are happy, you're happy. If you're happy and other people are unhappy, it's a problematic situation. And if you think about it, and generally speaking I think, when you find a way to help someone, you know, just out of your heart, it's just a natural thing to do - life is unfolded in a way where now you find you can help someone, even in a small way, it makes you happy to be able to do that - what a blessing