

## **“Personal and social transformation are indivisible” Do you agree?**

### **Sort of**

1. It depends how you're defining transformation. If you're giving it a very 'elevated' definition, then yes, many teachings would agree that there can be no true transformation of the individual without compassion, which implies others and thus society; and there can be no wisdom-based and hence truly effective transformation of society without wise and compassionate beings. On a lower level, though, it seems that personal and social transformation quite often are divided in various ways, and that the 'transformation', whether of self or society, does have some merit, even if not as effective as would be the case if the two went hand in hand.
2. As far as I understand, the 2 could effect, modify and reinforce each other - but I wouldn't use the word indivisible. Social transformation stems from vision, inspiration, clear strategies and effective action, which won't necessarily come about because people are working on their own minds and hearts.
3. I think that when people work on themselves that will always have an effect on their surroundings, which in the long run will be positive and probably inspiring in subtle ways. In the same way, for most people to have enough food, safety and shelter, as well as access to education will give them the best basis for developing both themselves and their society. And if they work on whatever transformation with a sense of a different value set than just materialism, I think they will go far. (If it's just materialism, they will just want to produce more, have more etc, which I don't think makes anyone happy in the longer run).
4. Its an extremely simplistic soundbite. I ticked sort of but may be it should be 'no' as I get the whiff of a hidden agenda
5. Personal acts does affect the social transformation.
6. A person needs certain conditions to be able to transform themselves. Injustice and lack of freedom in society can prevent personal transformation. On the otherhand, there are always exceptional individuals who achieve personal transformation despite an unfavourable social context, and who then pioneer social transformation.
7. Personal transformation inevitably affects those around me. But the effect will be greater if I'm more conscious of social objectives.
8. For me it depends what is meant by 'social'. I think that spiritual progress is only possible through an engagement with others, but that the most precious gift is the Dharma. The purpose of Buddhist social work should be to provide people with the conditions they need to be given the Dharma, the only thing that can truly help. This may involve improving social conditions so that these are more amenable to Dharma practice.
9. I think you can transform on a personal level without actively being involved in social transformation, but i think that when you get to a certain point in your own transformation the bodhisattva ideal becomes more alive and you realise it isn't just about you anymore, and you want to alleviate suffering and work to change those social barriers which cause suffering to all.

10. I think that if we are involved in personal transformation what ever changes we acheive will have a knock on effect. We will effect those around us. Of course as Buddhists we are working towards insight into the nature of our existence and also towards developemnt of wisdom and compassion both of which will open our eyes more ot our connection with others and our hearts to the suffering all around us. i believe the more intense our awareness of suffering the more likely we are to act. What for this action takes is the 'sort of bit. some folk will intensify their personal practice and other will want to go out and get their hands dirty.
11. While all of us may attempt personal transformation, social transformation requires different skills and efforts.
12. I think that is an ideal, they often are divisible.
13. Changes, of any kind, in a society can often affect its individual members, but it is rare for changes in an individual member to affect an entire society. I would argue that this is especially the case for philosophical changes.
14. I would have put it more like - " the altruistic dimension and personal practice are indivisible"
15. I think that personal transformation is limited without social engagement, but I think that its possible to be involved with social transformation but yet have limited personal transformation.
16. You have divided them by naming them. I would agree that personal change naturally translates into changes of view within the social sphere and social change affects the individual. The statement as it stands seems rather hard and, well, indivisible.
17. I don't have too much to know them, so I dont have more reference than their own word.
18. You can't repair samsara but you can make it a place of less suffering
19. working on both at the same time, so one may be at a different level to the other even though both moving in that direction
20. There can be practitioners deeply exploring their practice in retreat for months/years. The fact that there are people like that affects the world the more so if they come down the mountain and share the fruits. However it is not necessary to affect a social transformation to undergo a personal transformation. However if large numbers of people lived in accordance with the dharma this would begin to affect a social transformation and environmental transformation.
21. I feel most westeners are pretty cut off from our bodies/environment. Buddhists no different, possibly even more cut-off (!) if into kind of teaching/approach that is more spirit than soul orientated, spiritually by-passing their own issues in the name of reaching their goal to get off the wheel ie out of here!

22. I believe that to an extent people can develop personally without this extending further and instigating social development, but at a certain stage in a person's development there must be an element of social transformation in order to continue personal transformation.
23. While I would agree that to change the world each individual must change I don't believe that social transformation necessarily has the ability to affect a significant change in consciousness at least not on its own.
24. Sometimes transformation can start on the personal level, despite the social environment not being suitable. The transformed individual can then have a transforming effect on the social environment. This could also work the other way around. They don't necessarily need to go hand in hand.
25. I suggest that personal transformation requires energy and awareness: until these are present to a certain degree, awareness of social projects & the ability to participate may not exist. Personality is a factor: eg some people involved in social action are not that bothered about transforming themselves!
26. One doesn't necessarily lead to the other - I think this needs to be made explicit and brought into consciousness through practice.
27. When I believe that my acts have consequences there is no doubt they also have an effect on others. So the more I become more friendly, so will my environment.
28. but it all depends on what you mean by "transformation".
29. I think for many people's path these are indivisible, but I also have respect for people who are focussing on inward cultivation due to where they are.
30. As I understand it, the roots of greed and hatred are in the mind of each individual; as one clears these out of one's own mind in practice, one is more likely to act in ways that are beneficial to society at large. In addition, being involved in creating a harmonious society is likely to help the mind settle more and be more joyful when it comes to individual practice.
31. Although people may have periods where their transformation is purely personal at some point the development of metta will give them a need to change the world for the better
32. it depends on the conditions you are in
33. I strongly agree with the idea that individuals whose lives are transformed through the Dharma will influence a subtle transformation of the society they live in. However, that's a long way from guaranteeing that society will be transformed through the act of transforming individuals!
34. Depends on scale.
35. They interact, but can be considered separately.
36. Individual transformation affects those around you. But it can begin in a social setting totally unsympathetic.

37. ray's threefold sangha model: i think collectively "Personal and social transformation are indivisible." but not necessarily for individuals, some of whom should focus on the deepening of practice. i worry about the over-politicisation of 21C dharma
38. only to the extent that we are part of the society we live in and therefore our behaviour will affect society. we may not be engaged in active social change.
39. Well, sort of, because everything is joined up according to the Buddha - and yet also we need to make distinctions as well. I suppose it would also depend on the context. Perhaps in Asia the need for social transformation to then enable personal transformation is more needed, or just more apparent that it is in the west ( i mean where are your western projects?). Then also, arguably in the east society / culture is much more interconnected than our individualistic western culture. Which must have implications about how we view our practice?
40. I do not support simplistic statements of this sort
41. Increased inner clarity leads to less self concern/grasping and to greater empathy/compassion for the well being of all. However it depends on the individual and the opportunities available to express personal insight in socially active/expressive ways. Self concern can to readily fill the void again.
42. in theory but i don't put it into practice
43. The Question is an idealistic one. However, sometimes either one happens without the other and that is when problems can arise and an individual is at odds with the society. But If both happen in harmony then the change will be more complete, though it will probably take longer.
44. The statement suggests that everyone involved in personal transformation should be engaged in transforming society as well. They may want to be, but then again they may not.
45. They're inextricably connected though you can focus on one or the other.