



Role of Civil Societies in Sustaining the Earth's Ecological Health

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Contents

- Civil Society Defined
- Civil society and environmental advocacy
- Environmental Movements
- Engaged Buddhism and Buddhist Environmental Movements



What is Civil Society?

▪ **Civil society (CS)** = sphere of social interaction between the household and the state

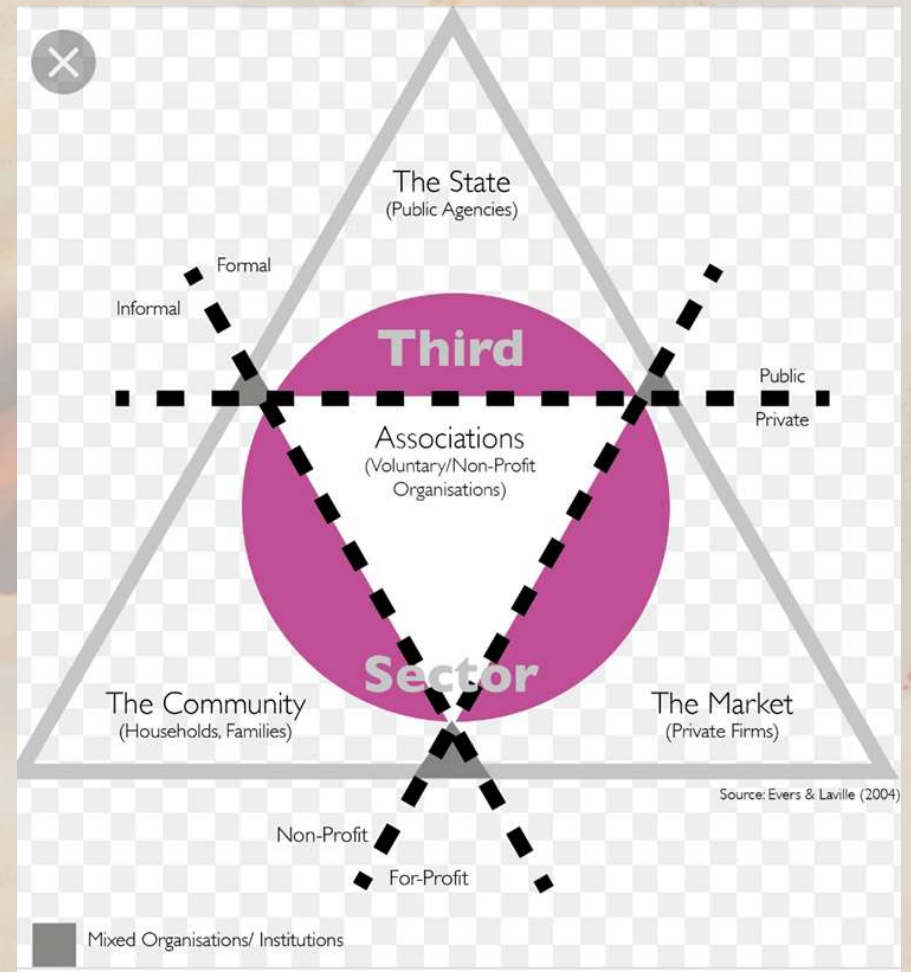


▪ CS is manifest in norms of community cooperation, structures of voluntary association, and networks of public communication.

▪ **Participatory:** “people freely associating and communicating...forming and reforming groups of all sorts...”
(Michael Walzer, 1991,: 298).

“the good life can only be lived in civil society” where citizens are guided by such “norms of civility” as social trust, political tolerance, and community activism (ibid).

Consists of ordinary people as the agents of modern civil society, creating it through “forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization”
(Cohen and Arato 1992, ix, 17-18).





Characteristics of Civil Society

No. 1	Associational autonomy: enjoy relative independence of both public authorities , and private production units , that is, family units and enterprises;
No. 2	Are capable of undertaking common actions to express and defend their interests;
No. 3	Based on mutual respect with state and private enterprises

Role of Civil Societies in Sustaining the Earth's Ecological Health

- **Civil society:** Originated as private organizations delivering services but expanded to include advocacy and grassroots mobilisation.

Where is civil society most prevalent in development?

'soft' areas of welfare, community-level and other self-help interventions jargon of participation, empowerment, stakeholders and the like is most pervasive. (Bernstein, 2005: 120)

Work on broader development themes:

community development, grassroots politics, gender studies and natural resource management, agricultural technology, etc.

In the rural development field, civil society (including NGOs) acted as innovators of new technologies and approaches to working with the poor.



Environmentalism

- Environmentalism **manifests the concerns of industrialized society in the twentieth century**, and in particular the **environmentalist critique of industrialization as a model of development**.
- Environmentalism (in the Western context) has been an **element of industrial society** since its origins in the **late eighteenth century**.
- **Key issues:**
 - Control over natural resources pose challenges in relation to the governance of markets
 - The allocation and legitimization of property rights.

Types of Environmental Civil Society Organisations

CSOs involved in environmental governance are highly diverse

Local, national, regional, and international groups

Pursuing various interests:

- environmental protection,
- sustainable development,
- poverty alleviation,
- animal welfare

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), of Agenda 21, classifies civil society as:

- Women
- Children and Youth
- Indigenous Peoples and Communities
- Non-governmental Organizations
- Workers and Trade Unions
- The Scientific and Technological Community
- Farmers

Roots of Civil Society in Environmentalism

- 1945: NGOs pushed for inserting human rights language into the UN Charter and have been active in that policy domain since.
- 1948: UN listed forty-one consultative groups that were formally accredited to participate in consultative processes;
- 1972: The first intergovernmental environmental summit, the UN Conference on the Human Environment is cited as one factor behind the rise in NGOs (Conca, 1996).
- In the 1980s, forestry concerns were included on the agenda of intergovernmental deliberations under the pressure of NGOs (Humphreys, 1996).
- Pre 1992: Environmental organizations began intense internal capacity building efforts to gain more sophisticated understanding of the international policymaking process (Conca, 1996).
- 1992: Agenda 21 (Rio Earth Summit) affirmed that the commitment and genuine involvement of non-state actors are critical to reaching sustainable development goals (though the term 'civil society' is not explicitly mentioned);



Social Movements

- A **network of informal interactions** between a plurality of **individuals, groups** and/or **organizations**
- Engaged in a **political or cultural conflict**,
- On the basis of a **shared collective identity**.

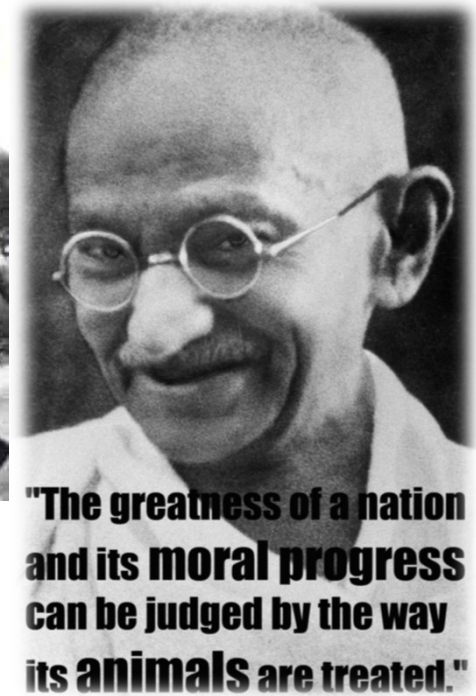


Social Movement: Terminology

- The term "social movements" was introduced in 1848 by the **German Sociologist Lorenz von Stein** in his book *Socialist and Communist Movements since the Third French Revolution (1848)* in which he introduced the term "social movement" into scholarly discussions- actually depicting in this way **political movements fighting for the social rights understood as welfare rights.**







Social Movements in India

- Bishnoi Movement. Year: 1700s. Place: Khejarli, Marwar region, Rajasthan state. Leaders: Amrita Devi along with Bishnoi villagers in Khejarli and surrounding villages.
- Aim: Save sacred trees from being cut down by the king's soldiers for a new palace.
- Chipko Movement. Year: 1973. Place: In Chamoli district and later at Tehri-Garhwal district of ...
- Save Silent Valley Movement. Year: 1978. Place: Silent Valley
- Jungle Bachao Andholan. Year: 1982. Place: Singbhum district of Bihar. Leaders:



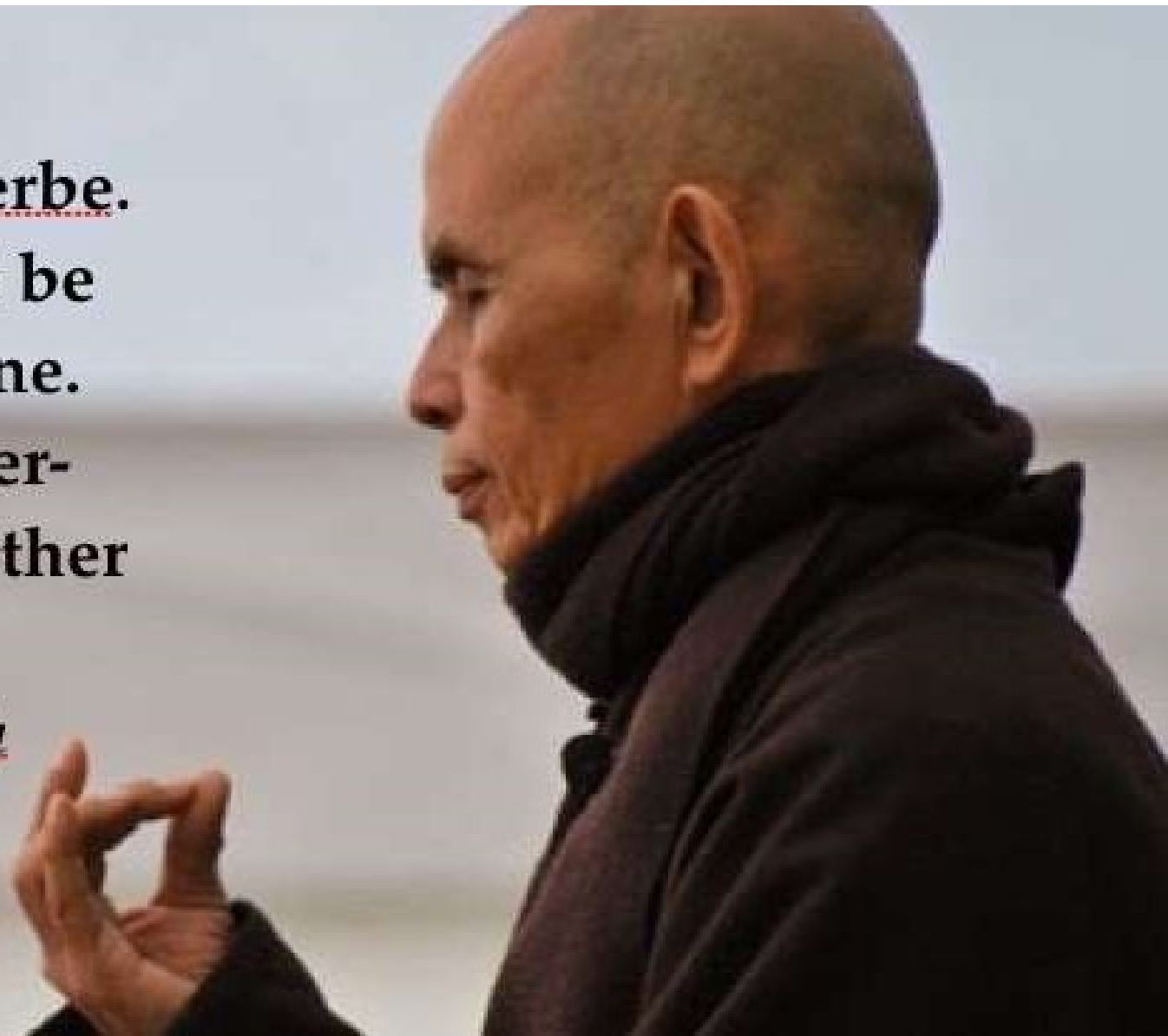
Engaged Buddhism

- The term "Engaged Buddhism" was coined by the Vietnamese Thiền Buddhist teacher Thích Nhất Hạnh in the 1950s in his collection of articles, "A Fresh Look at Buddhism".
- **Engaged Buddhism**, also known as **socially engaged Buddhism**, refers to a Buddhist social movement that emerged in Asia in the 20th century, composed of Buddhists who are seeking ways to apply the Buddhist ethics, insights acquired from meditation practice, and the teachings of the Buddhist dharma to contemporary situations of social, political, environmental and economic suffering, and injustice.
- Engaged Buddhism applies the teachings of the Buddha to social life in order to bring about social change.
- Engaged Buddhists hope to connect traditional Buddhist beliefs to protest and social action.



**'To be' is to interbe.
You cannot just be
by yourself alone.
You have to inter-
be with every other
thing.**

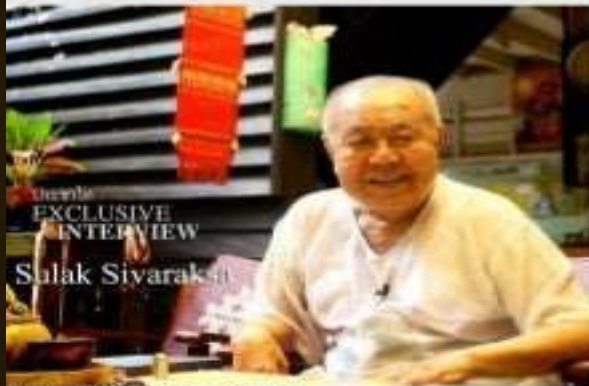
- Thich Nhat Hanh



Concept of Engaged Buddhism

ENGAGED BUDDHISM:

- "At its broadest definition socially engaged Buddhism extends across public engagement in caring and service, social and environmental protest and analysis, nonviolence as a creative way of overcoming conflict, and 'right livelihood' and similar initiatives toward a socially just and ecologically sustainable society." (Jones 2003:173).



Sulak Sivaraksa

Thich Nhat Hanh



The 14th Dalai Lama



Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.
2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice nonattachment from views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times.
3. Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrow-mindedness.
4. Do not avoid suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering, including personal contact, visits, images and sounds. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world.
5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need.

Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism

6. Do not maintain anger or hatred. Learn to penetrate and transform them when they are still seeds in your consciousness. As soon as they arise, turn your attention to your breath in order to see and understand the nature of your hatred.

7. Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Practice mindful breathing to come back to what is happening in the present moment. Be in touch with what is wondrous, refreshing, and healing both inside and around you. Plant seeds of joy, peace, and understanding in yourself in order to facilitate the work of transformation in the depths of your consciousness.

8. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. Make every effort to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread news that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticise or condemn things of which you are not sure. Always speak truthfully and constructively. Have the courage to speak out about situations of injustice, even when doing so may threaten your own safety.

10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party. A religious community, however, should take a clear stand against oppression and injustice and should strive to change the situation without engaging in partisan conflicts.

Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism

11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. Do not invest in companies that deprive others of their chance to live. Select a vocation that helps realise your ideal of compassion.

12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever means possible to protect life and prevent war.

13. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

14. Do not mistreat your body. Learn to handle it with respect. Do not look on your body as only an instrument. Preserve vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realisation of the Way. (For brothers and sisters who are not monks and nuns:) Sexual expression should not take place without love and commitment. In sexual relations, be aware of future suffering that may be caused. To preserve the happiness of others, respect the rights and commitments of others. Be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world. Meditate on the world into which you are bringing new beings.

Tzu Chi Environmental Movement

■ *Taiwan has an impressive record for recycling. Without a doubt, Tzu Chi volunteers spread across more than 8,800 recycling stations and points in Taiwan have contributed to this success*

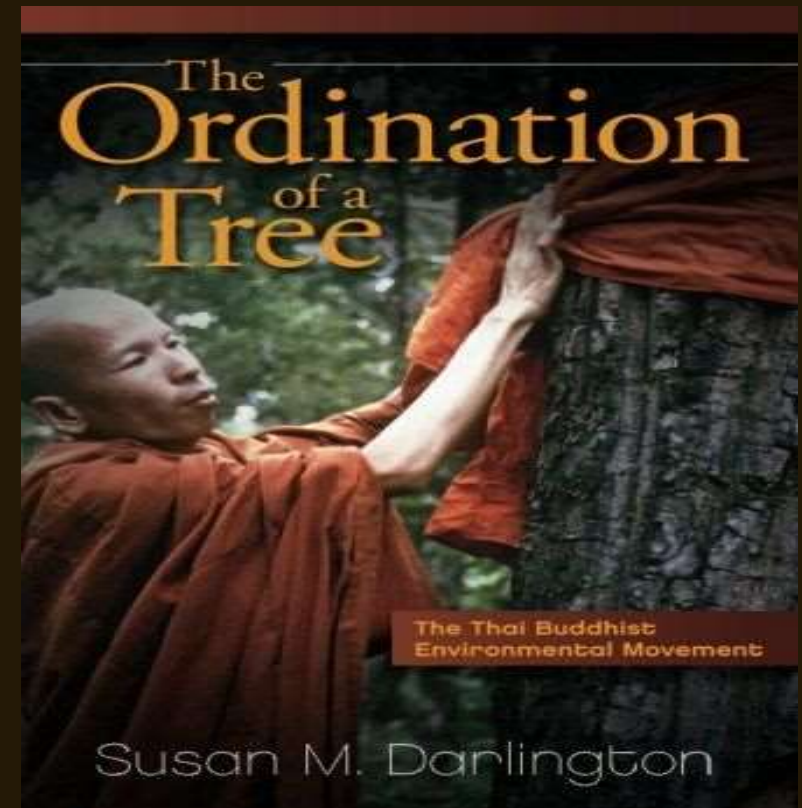
■ She has constantly reminded us that “time is running out,” that we must quicken our pace to safeguard our environment before it is too late. She has urged the international community to reach a consensus to save the planet from further degradation and then act together on that consensus.

■ Tzu Chi recycling volunteers have realized the urgent imperative for environmental protection and take Master Cheng Yen’s mission to protect the environment as their own. They lead a simple life, conserve water and electricity, and curb their consumption habits. They collect reusable garbage and sort it out at recycling stations for reuse, which reduces the need to extract new raw materials from the Earth. Well aware that we have only one Earth, they work together to cut down on pollution so that we can leave a better living environment for future generations.



Thai Buddhist Environmental Movement

- *Through rituals like tree ordinations, monks are integrating Buddhist principles into the environmental movement in order to garner support from their followers and encourage sustainable practices.*
- Symbolic tree ordination is a ritual initiated by **Ecology Monks (Phra Nak Anuraksa)**, a group of Thai Buddhist Monks. It has also been practiced by Cambodian, Vietnamese and Burmese monks in the last two and a half decades.



Tibetan Buddhist Environmental Movement



The Gyalwang Karmapa is a passionate environmentalist and regularly incorporates this theme into his teachings and life's work. For example, he established the Khoryug movement and annual conference to encourage Buddhist communities and monasteries in the Himalayan region to act in sustainable and environmentally friendly ways.

[The Environment | Karmapa - The Official Website of the 17th Karmapa \(kagyuooffice.org\)](http://kagyuooffice.org)



Tibetan Buddhist Environmental Movement

The Gyalwang Drukpa is an active environmentalist, educator and the spiritual head of the Drukpa Lineage, one of the main Buddhist schools of the Himalayas founded by the great Indian saint Naropa (1016–1100CE) with a thousand-year legacy in India. He applies ancient Buddhist philosophy to resolve today's problems and has millions of followers worldwide



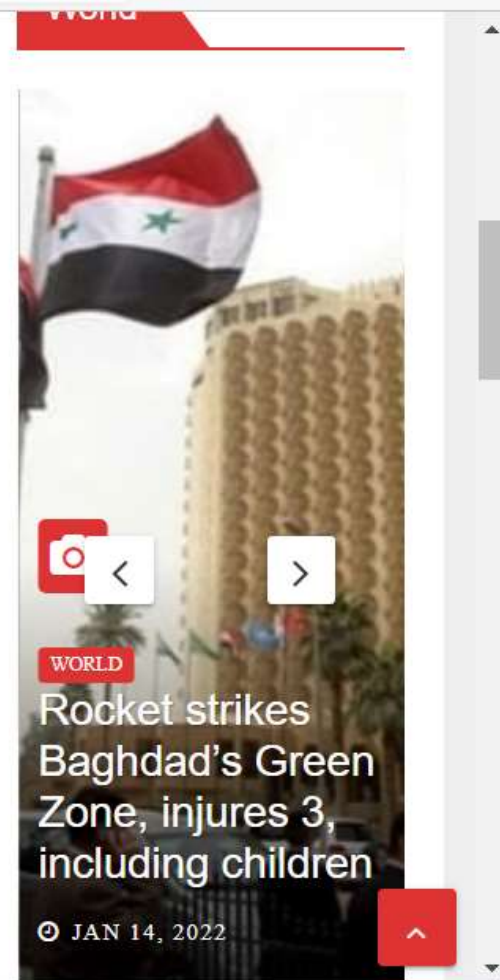
JAMMU & KASHMIR SPORT

Ladakh based Drukpa Nuns bike across Nepal and India in 2500 km Cycle Yatra; reach Jammu

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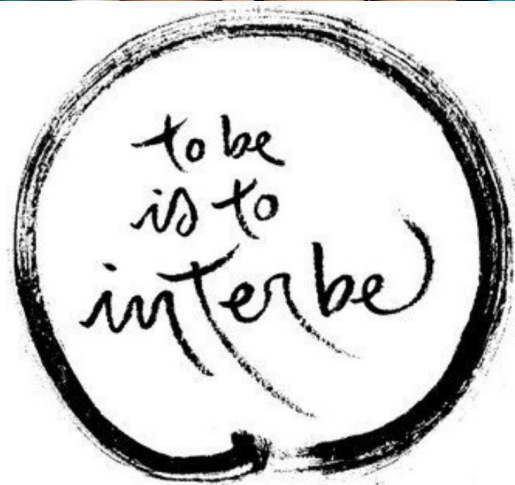


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