



## **Buddhist Economics**

### *The implications of the Eightfold Path*

So what are the implications of the Eightfold Path for Economics? Buddhist Economics requires a complete change of mindset. Conventional economics sees consumption as the ultimate aim of economic activity – the more the better. Buddhism, on the other hand, distinguishes between 'right' consumption and 'wrong' consumption. Right consumption is the use of goods and services to satisfy the desire for true well being. Wrong consumption arises from using goods and services for pleasing sensations or egotification. The compulsive consumption which characterises modern consumer society breeds dissatisfaction. At the heart of Buddhism is the wisdom of moderation – the 'middle way' between austerity and excessive consumption. The objective of well being (as opposed to the gratification of sensual desires) acts as a control on economic activity. No longer are we struggling against each other to satisfy endless desires. There's no over-production or consumption, whereas today's capitalist society actively encourages –and indeed relies on – over-consumption. In conventional economics, work is considered a necessary evil, for which compensation is required, in order to produce goods and services for consumption – the ultimate aim of economic activity. The Buddhist perspective, in contrast, sees work as enabling human development through cooperation with others, helping to overcome self-centredness. In modern capitalist societies, many jobs preclude this sort of development or make it extremely difficult.