



## On the Very Idea of the Good in Pāli Buddhism

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In recent years there have been many efforts to try and understand the normative structure of Buddhist ethics (Keown, Siderits, Goodman, et al). However, as G.E. Moore himself says, the first question that we should address is the question: “What is the good?” Unless this question is answered, “the rest of Ethics is as good as useless from the point of view of systematic knowledge” (Principia Ethica). It is my supposition that this initial question should apply also to the study of Buddhist ethics. In this paper I will argue that there is such a thing as the “the good” in Pāli Buddhism. I will argue that the good should be properly defined as the alleviation of suffering and the promotion of non-suffering. I will also address G.E. Moore’s objection to moral definitionalism through an appeal to a special Buddhist strategy already considered by David J. Kalupahana. We will find that Pāli Buddhist moral definitionalism is quite able to survive Moore’s objection.