The Dhammapada is the earliest collection of the sayings of the Buddha, and these are its first four verses. The fact that these verses are placed at the beginning of the first Buddhist book suggests that the early Buddhists considered these four verses the most important teaching of the Buddha.

They are important for our course because of the strong and clear way they teach the concept of “naming,” which is so important in poem one of Tao Te Ching, and also is important in Parmenides’ poem.

1. We are what we think.
   All that we are arises with our thoughts.
   With our thoughts we make the world.
   Speak or act with an impure mind
   And trouble will follow you
   As the wheel follows the ox that draws the cart.

2. We are what we think.
   All that we are arises with our thoughts.
   With our thoughts we make the world.
   Speak or act with a pure mind
   And happiness will follow you
   As your shadow, unshakable.

3. "Look how he abused me and hurt me,
   How he threw me down and robbed me."
   Live with such thoughts and you live in hate.

4. "Look how he abused me and hurt me,
   How he threw me down and robbed me."
   Abandon such thoughts, and live in love.