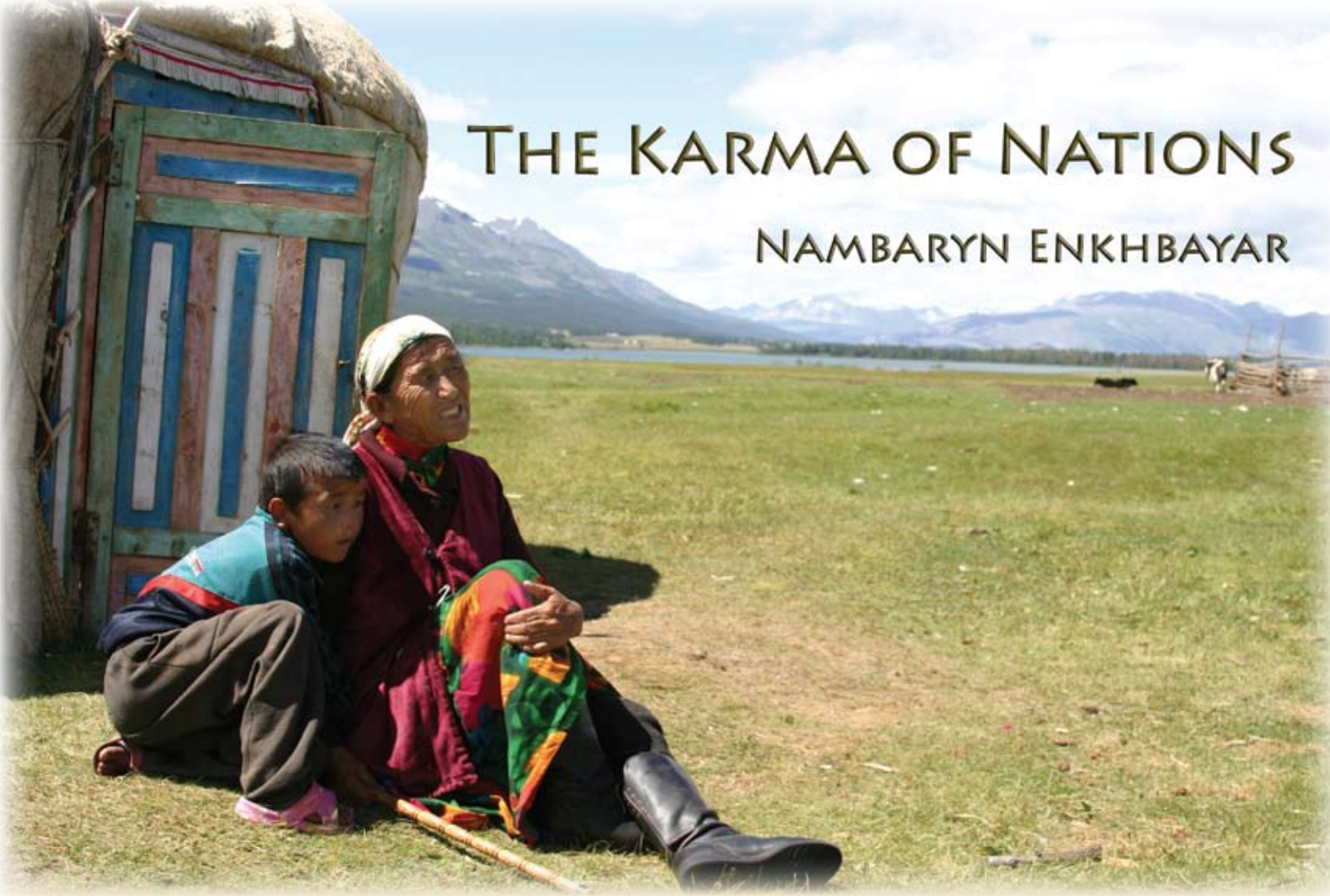

The Karma of Nations

Nambaryn Enkhbayar

Buddhism explains that everything has been created by a cause or is the result of causation. In other words, there was and/or still remains a cause behind everything and every phenomenon witnessed in the world. One can say, in a very general way, then, that in its search to understand the nature of every phenomenon or a complex of phenomena, Buddhist philosophy seeks the cause or a complex of causes lying behind a phenomenon or phenomena. We can draw a parallel between Buddhist philosophy and economics here in that economics should generally be a science to discover the reason or a complex of causes behind every economic and social phenomenon.

An understanding of the theory of causation regulating the very existence and activity of everything in the world according to Buddhist philosophy brings us to the next category of Buddhist philosophy—that is, the concept of karma. Karma is a kind of accumulated potential power or weakness gained as a result of each deed done in the past. Thus, every human being is unique, and all human beings and all communities and nations are different from each other because of their deeds. The economic development of each nation is unique in the sense that it is an accumulation of actions, both good and bad, that the leadership of a given country has carried out after being given power to rule a nation.

The responsibility of every individual and every nation is to be aware of the results of their respective actions and inactions because in the course of time these actions and inactions accumulate and form one's current condition. Put simply, one is responsible for one's present status, however good or bad it is, and each nation is responsible for the condition in which it finds itself. Karma indirectly means accountability. Every person, every government, and every nation should be accountable for its deeds. There is no individual without his or her karma; similarly, there is no nation or government without accountability.