

Shabkar (1781–1851), the “Singer of the Land of Snows,” was a renowned yogi and poet who, through his autobiography and songs, developed a vision of Tibet as a Buddhist imagined community. By incorporating vernacular literature, providing a narrative mapping of the Tibetan plateau, reviving and adapting the legend of Tibetans as Avalokiteśvara’s chosen people, and promoting shared Buddhist values and practices, Shabkar’s concept of Tibet opened up the discursive space for the articulation of modern forms of Tibetan nationalism.

Employing analytical lenses of cultural nationalism and literary studies, Rachel Pang explores the indigenous epistemologies of identity, community, and territory that predate contemporary state-centric meanings of nation and nationalism in Tibet and provides the definitive treatment of this foundational figure.