

Reinventing the Central Asian Rawap in Modern China: Musical Stereotypes, Minority Modernity, and Uyghur Instrumental Music

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Abstract: *This article concerns the centrality of musical stereotypes in minority representation in modern China, with examples from the post-1950s concert tradition of the rawap, a Central Asian long-necked plucked lute used extensively today in traditional and modern music of the Uyghur, Turkic Muslims in northwest China. An icon of the official version of minority modernity, the rawap has been recreated to constitute a stereotypical portrayal of minorities as joyful merrymakers while also to embody the discourses of progress and enlightenment. Minority musicians have selectively co-opted certain stereotyped representations as aesthetic resources for subaltern performances.*

Introduction

In November 2009, a group of about 20 musicians and dancers of the Uyghur ethnicity—Turkic Muslims from a minority “autonomous region” called Xinjiang (new frontier) in the far-flung Chinese northwest—appeared in Hong Kong as guest performers in a concert with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, a government-sponsored ensemble. The Uyghur group consisted mostly of faculty members and music majors from Xinjiang Shifan Daxue (Xinjiang Normal University) of the provincial capital Urumqi, where a few months earlier in July, deadly clashes between the indigenous Uyghur and the Chinese settlers claimed more than 150 lives. The Uyghur musicians considered themselves among the very fortunate few to be granted permission to travel abroad, despite the close scrutiny throughout the tour. The concert featured an assortment of Uyghur and Chinese music from traditional and modern repertoires, loosely connected by the theme “The Silk Road Journey,” which, the program maintains, “begins in the 7th century from the Tang capital of Chang’an, going west until we arrive at Xinjiang of today.” To many in the audience, the political undertones should not be unfamiliar: continuities between Uyghur music and ancient Chinese culture substantiate Chinese—rather than Middle Eastern and Central Asian— influences on Uyghur culture, affirming a unified Chinese nation to which the Uyghur have always belonged.

Despite the politico-historical frame, most compositions included in the program were performed in a rather ahistorical fashion: rearranged tunes from folk songs and the classical muqam, rendered with an indiscriminately uplifting spirit by a colorful ensemble of instrumentalists, vocalists, and dancers dressed in exotic costumes. Altogether it reminded the predominantly Chinese audience of the minority stereotype often showcased in official ceremonies and tourist shows, which portrays minorities as carefree merrymakers who are good at entertaining “guests” with festive music that was primarily joyful, easy to listen to, and immediately appealing at a sensual level. At the same time, this stereotype was complicated in the concert by the performance of a “concerto,” *Méning rawabim* (My rawap), written for solo *rawap*—a Uyghur long-necked plucked lute—and orchestra. The concerto was marked by technically challenging passages, stark dynamic contrasts, equal-tempered scales, and regularized meters—all features typical of post-1950s modernist Chinese compositions. At the time, it challenged the “singing-and-dancing” stereotype for Uyghur music: it was contemplative and sophisticated—anything but amusing or playful.

Its ambivalent musical discourse suggests a Chinese mediated Uyghur soundscape that resists any convenient analysis. The persistence of stereotyped musical representation of minorities has attracted substantial scholarly interest over the last few decades. Following the critique of “Orientalism” as a discursive body of European knowledge for not only understanding but also “dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 1978, 3), musicologists have worked to understand how musical stereotypes and their Othering practices are connected to the exercise of power yet simultaneously offer a space where the (mis)represented Others may engage in strategies to subvert hegemonic discourses (Garrett 2004; Locke 1991; Tsou 1997).

This essay concerns the centrality of musical stereotypes in minority representation and identities in China. I look at musical stereotypes not as static entities unilaterally created and deployed by the powerful majority but as constituted sites at once affirmed and contested in their performance. I contend that the subordinates are less often passive victims of a well-staged stereotyping enterprise, but are frequently active agents complicit in negotiating represented stereotypes. I am concerned not only with how stereotypes have informed audience perception, but also with the complex ways in which they have been recast by minority musicians in a modernist light and with important nationalist overtones. My analysis concentrates on the post-1950s concert tradition, particularly the professionalization of the *rawap*, arguably the highest profile Uyghur instrument to play an important part in minority representation.

I begin by offering a brief background of minority musical stereotypes in China and the modern Uyghur instrumental tradition. Then I explore the ways in which the re-creation of the *rawap* as a professional, concert stage instrument

in the latter half of the twentieth century complicated the “singing-and-dancing” minority stereotype and played a pivotal role in fashioning a progressive and enlightened image that resonates in other realms of Uyghur life. I examine musical professionalism and stereotypes as mutual processes mediated by the materiality of musical instruments. I deliberately draw examples from a variety of performance sources, including films, composed “minority folk songs,” indigenous folk and classical music, concert repertoires, as well as the life and works of the legendary rawap performer Dawut Awut (1939–2007). These will illuminate the pervasiveness of musical stereotypes in minority musical life and suggest their mediation among genres, creative individuals, and broader social processes.

Stereotyping the Rawap

The Chinese legacy of racial/ethnic stereotyping has a well-documented past that goes back before the Communist takeover in 1949. The fundamental thesis is a chauvinistic one: minority tribes and other “barbaric” people on the imperial periphery have never existed at a state of civilization comparable to the Chinese and the Sinicized non-Han in China Proper (such as the Manchu of the Qing dynasty). Inspired by ideas of social Darwinism, Chinese modernists since the late nineteenth century have worked to portray their various minority groups as yet-to-be-enlightened primitives and, as Dru Gladney (1994, 14–20) argues, relationally construct a homogenous Han ethnicity that is advanced and progressive.¹ Such evolutionist discourse is often elaborated by a racial/ethnic stereotyping frame, one that exhibits the primitivity of minority cultures through presumably timeless arts, conveying primordial passions for the exotically beautiful and sexually enticing, often feminized as objects of Chinese and heterosexual male desire or fantasy.

Musical performance has always been a part of such a stereotyping enterprise. Minority bodies, in the first instance, are constructed as musical, skillfully producing sounds that invoke immediate, corporeal pleasure. In addition, as irrelevant as they may seem to average audience members, such minority stereotypes have provided China with convenient resources to reinvent itself as a multiracial/ethnic modern state with displayable cultural diversity, supplied by musically gifted yet politically subservient minority citizens who are—and often only are—using a clichéd Chinese expression, “good at singing and dancing” (*nengge shanwu*).

Musical instruments offer an important lens to examine the multiple frames of the stereotyping enterprise. As material objects they are powerful emblems of ethnicities and places where identities are referenced. They may also be usefully conceived as social beings, produced and maintained in webs of social relations and contested meanings (Dawe 1996; Qureshi 1997; Polak 2000). As

Regula Qureshi argues, the musical instrument offers a “special kind of materials memory, in its dual capacity of a physical body and its embodied acoustic identity,” and is a “potent icon of social practice as well as personal experience.” The relationship between an instrument’s “affective, embodied, and social meanings” and the “discursive representations of such meanings,” according to Qureshi, is what “endows an instrument with a standard musical identity.” Its aesthetic discourse, in addition, is a tool of control, which creates a hegemonic, dominant, yet “intersubjective musicality,” a process in which subaltern musical practices and instruments not only are “co-opted and discursively redefined” but also involved in the process of negotiation (Qureshi 1997, 3–4).²

The conspicuous appearances of minority musical instruments for the Chinese audience and the sonic imaginaries so invoked have provided the state with useful tools to stereotype minority cultures. Each minority group in China finds itself often represented in media, the tourist industry, and official ceremonies with at least one or two staple instruments: the reed-pipe mouth organ *qeej* (in Chinese, *lusheng*) for the Hmong; the horse-head fiddle *morin khuur* (in Chinese, *matouqin*) for the Mongolian; and the plucked lute *dombra* (*dongbula*) for the Kazakh, to name a few. The Uyghur candidate for such stereotyping enterprise is the rawap (*rewapu*), a versatile instrument used in a variety of musical settings, ranging from folk singing (such as the narrative genre *qoshaq*) and classical muqam to modernist orchestras and popular songs.

The rawap commonly seen among professional musicians today, known as the *Kashgar rawap*, has 7 strings—1 melodic string plus 6 sympathetic strings—running along a nylon-fretted fingerboard (*deste*) and a small hemispherical resonating body (*kasha*) covered with python skin. Inlaid with bone or other decorative materials, the entire body is made out of one single piece of hollowed-out mulberry wood, with curved barbs (*münggüz*)—symbolizing goat horns—placed where the fingerboard and resonating chamber meet. It is held horizontally close to the chest of the performer. A small plastic triangular plectrum (*zekhmek*) is used to pluck the strings with a vigorous wrist movement. In the modern tuning standardized in the 1960s, the melodic string, thinnest and highest-pitched, is fixed at middle C, and the sympathetic strings, which are also used to accentuate the melody on strong beats, are arranged according to circle of fifths, from outer to inner, as G, D, A, E, B, and F \sharp (fig. 1).³

A prominent icon in the representation of minority culture, the rawap is frequently featured in minority-themed popular music, films, paintings, and dramas, often associated with the much romanticized images of unruly horse-riding vagabonds and singing-and-dancing minorities. In some sense, the popularity of the instrument has allowed it to travel across multiple borders and translate Uyghur music to the Chinese world. At the same time, the rawap lives an exuberant concert life in modern Uyghur music that is unmatched by any other



Figure 1. Musician Alimjan Qadir playing the Kashgar rawap (photo by the author).

instrument. The sheer amount of composed, adapted, and rearranged works for rawap has come to constitute the post-1950s minority solo tradition; *Méning rawabim* is among the earliest and best known. The rawap was among the first Uyghur instruments taught in modern music programs at universities and conservatories, the earliest of which was established in 1958 at Xinjiang University. It was also the first Uyghur instrument with an officially published notated collection; the single-volume *Rewapu duzouqu xuan* (Selected solos for the rawap) compiled by renowned performer Pettarjan Abdulla (1935–1994) and published in 1980. It contained 12 solo pieces in staff notation with clearly defined key and time signatures as well as precise rhythm, tempo, and dynamic markings.

A few musical qualities of the rawap have marked it as a favorite candidate for the stereotyping enterprise. First of all, traditional Uyghur ensembles typically comprise varying numbers of bowed and plucked lutes that are widely shared among other Central Asian traditions. Yet not every instrument is equally employed in all regional Uyghur traditions. The only pan-Uyghur instrument—apart from the frame-drum *dap*—is the *dutar*, a long-necked plucked lute with two silk/nylon strings; it is primarily a domestic instrument with a soft, intimate timbre. The northern tradition, based in the town of Ghulja, is represented by another plucked lute, the *tembur*, which produces a contrasting solid and bright timbre. What immediately distinguishes the rawap, with its origins in the southern tradition, from these two plucked lutes is its timbre—the resonating chamber is covered with animal skin rather than a wooden board. The modern rawap is

also higher pitched and produces a much louder, brighter, and more penetrating sound than the other two plucked lutes, which, to a certain extent, makes it an ideal candidate for the “joyful minority” musical stereotype. Uyghur composer Sa'idjan of the state's song-and-dance troupe in Ghulja once explained to me that he would use the tembur to portray the feeling of “sad and difficult times”; yet if a cheerful atmosphere for a large-scale performance was demanded, then the rawap would surely be the preferred instrument (Sa'idjan, interview with the author, September 2009). The musical image resonates well with icons of bright, forward-looking, and mostly male performers (figs. 2 and 3).⁴



Figure 2. Magazine cover of *Shinjang yashliki* (Xinjiang youth), showing a young Uyghur musician holding the modern Kashgar rawap.



Figure 3. Statue of a male rawap performer erected outside the Grand Theater of Nanmen Square in Urumqi (photo by the author).

The musical identity for the rawap, however, is problematized by conflicting discourses among musicians from different regional traditions. Ghulja musicians, for example, inherited a strong sense of cultural superiority and a disdain for southern Uyghur cultures—centered in such oasis towns as Kashgar and Khotan—as exemplified in language accents, cuisine, architecture, and even personality. Most considered the southern style—as symbolized by the rawap—as coarse and too direct, in contrast with the refined and delicate northern style. Musicians from southern traditions refute such northern prejudice by citing the modernity achieved by the rawap in recent decades. For

example, Abliz Ayup, a senior music educator from Yarkand (near Kashgar) insisted that the rawap has attained its popularity today primarily through notated music: most rawap performers today read notation, he maintained, as opposed to *dutar* and *tembur* performers, who are by and large musically illiterate (Abliz Ayup, interview with the author, September 2009).⁵ Stylistic differences aside, the rawap has indeed never been a regular member for classical *maqam* instrumentation in either tradition. While the *tembur* accompanies most of the northern-style *muqam* singing, the quintessential instrument in the southern *muqam* tradition is the *satar*, a long-neck bowed lute with numerous sympathetic strings. In other words, the premodern rawap maintained a folk, nonclassical identity that made it a more desirable candidate for socialist reform.

Becoming a National Instrument

Discourses of musical modernity and ethno-nationalism are often intertwined with progressive socialist ideals through interplay between indigenous musical elements and nineteenth-century European concert musical language (see Buchanan 1995). Modernization of Uyghur music in the latter half of the twentieth century tells a story not unlike other socialist musical reforms. It is also tinged with at least two interrelated factors that resonate across other minority performances in modern China. The first is an intersection of the discourse of musical modernity and what Harrell calls the state's "civilizing project," a series of ostensibly benevolent undertakings aimed at raising the "peripheral peoples' civilization to the level of the center, or at least closer to that level" (Harrell 1995, 4). One way to achieve such "civilization" was to "improve" minority cultures according to the ways in which traditional Chinese cultures had recently been "improved." In music performance, this has meant the introduction of European musical practices such as functional harmony, equal-tempered tuning, orchestral texture, solo virtuosity, sanitized timbre, standardized repertoire, professionalized performing groups, written notation, and so forth. Emergent is a kind of "traveling module," conceptualized as universalizing, equally applicable to every minority musical tradition on its way to becoming modern and "civilized" (see During 2005). This civilizing project required a second procedure: it identified certain premodern styles and genres as hopeful candidates from the array of regional and subcultural varieties to be transformed into a higher order of musical collectivity. Elsewhere I have borrowed Gladney's concept of *ethnogenesis* (2004, 208–19) to suggest the conceived homogeneity of *On ikki muqam*—a set of 12 classical musical suites descended from the sixteenth-century Yarkand court. The set represents a process of transforming previously scattered regional *muqam* traditions into a collective classical genre, and has come to symbolize

an undifferentiated minority past for both the Chinese state and minority nationalists (Wong 2006a).

The rawap and its music have been at the core of such a civilizing enterprise and a collectivizing process. The rawap's premodern history is marked by a complex transnational identity and a multiplicity of local styles. The term *rawap* has etymological links to the horizontally held, plucked lutes of at least three Central Asian nationalities: the Tajik *robab*, the Uyghur rawap, and Uzbek *rabāb*.⁶ Standard Uyghur rawap repertoires today indeed include a significant number of works of Tajik or Uzbek origin.⁷ Within the Uyghur rawap, there are at least five regional variants: the Kashgar rawap (the standardized rawap described above), the Qumul rawap from the eastern town Qumul, the Qoychi rawap (Herder's rawap) found in Khotan, the Dolan rawap of the Dolan people from the southwest (fig. 4), and the *chaplīma* rawap (a new instrument created in the 1960s; see below). Some of these regional types are distinctively Uyghur, while others, such as the Qumul and the Dolan rawaps, with their large number of sympathetic strings and fretless fingerboard, more closely resemble the Afghan *rubāb* than their Kashgar and Uzbek siblings (Mamut 1981; Liu 1992, 172–3, 178–89).

Older versions of the Kashgar rawap—upon which the modern Uyghur rawap, described above, is based—typically had fewer strings, which were usually gut strings with lower tension, and a resonator usually covered with goat, donkey, or deer skin. The instrument produced a mellower sound, as opposed

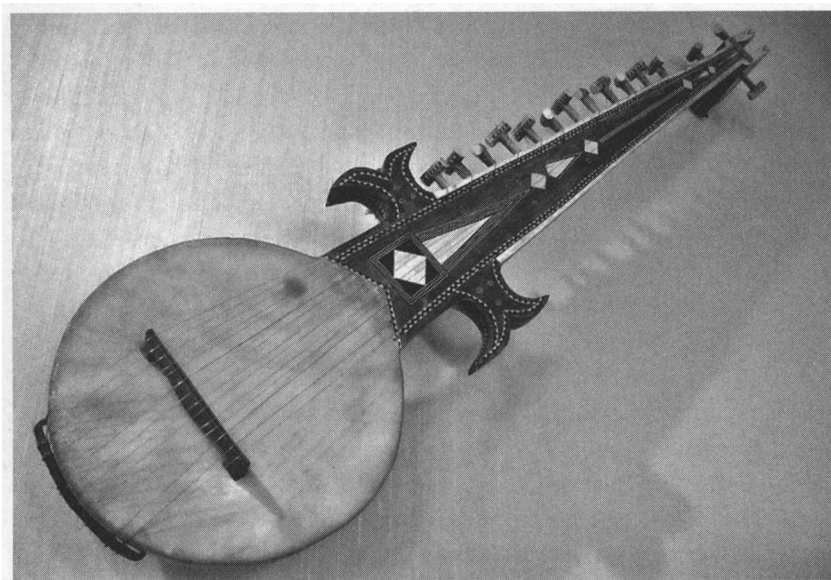


Figure 4. Dolan rawap (photo by the author).

to the brighter timbre of today's rawap which is covered with python skin. Frets on the fingerboard were fewer and unevenly spaced.⁸ Considered morphologically flawed and declared unsuitable for virtuosic styles and concert-hall acoustic requirements, these older rawap types were hard put to negotiate qualities demanded by contemporary aesthetics. Accordingly, quite a few modifications were made to "improve" the instrument: the resonating body was enlarged and covered with python skin for a more consistent timbre; the fingerboard was lengthened to accommodate more frets—currently about 28—arranged in 12 equal-tempered semitones; gut strings were replaced by steel strings adopted from the Chinese hammered dulcimer *yangqin* to produce a piercingly bright and penetrating sonority, particularly in the higher tessitura; the number of strings was fixed at seven (previously variable between three and five); and the melodic string was changed from a double course to a single string (Wan 1986, 50–1). As if to compensate for the loss of tradition, the modern rawap is often beautifully decorated with exotic patterns inlaid on the fingerboard and resonator, previously of animal bone or horn but now mostly plastic. This transformed rawap became the musical icon of pan-Uyghur identity and was dubbed the *milliy* (ethnic) *rawap* (Alimjan 2004, 1–10), favored for its capacity to perform a variety of modern and traditional pieces with a wide range of techniques and sound qualities.⁹

As if all these changes were not enough, the reform project of the 1950s and 1960s was further implemented by the creation of the *chaplisma rawap*—the "stick-on" rawap, also known variously as *reformed rawap*, *northern rawap*, or *Uzbek rawap*, owing to its assumed influence from Uzbekistan.¹⁰ It emerged as a more progressively "improved" instrument (fig. 5). Sympathetic strings were all removed, replaced by a pair of outer double course steel strings (tuned to D), a pair of middle double course steel strings (tuned to A), and an inner single gut/silk string (tuned to D). While the outer double course often plays the melody, the middle course and inner string are mostly reserved for playing triadic chords. The resonating chamber is more bowl-shaped than hemispherical. Finally, the reform project developed a bass rawap, which is basically an enlarged *chaplisma rawap* with 3 single strings tuned an octave lower than the standard rawap. The bass rawap is indispensable in professional ensembles today, often used to provide harmonic elements for the middle and lower registers of the plucked string section (Tursunjan [1997] 2007, 71–88).

The two modern rawap types are often used interchangeably with shared repertoires, although the Kashgar rawap is often preferred for solo performance, while the *chaplisma rawap* is a favorite ensemble instrument.¹¹ Conservatory-trained performers today are proficient in both, which are extolled as "good-looking and scientific, with fine timbre, [large] dynamic range, and accurate fretting that have substantially enhanced expressivity" (Pettarjan 1980, 1). Their

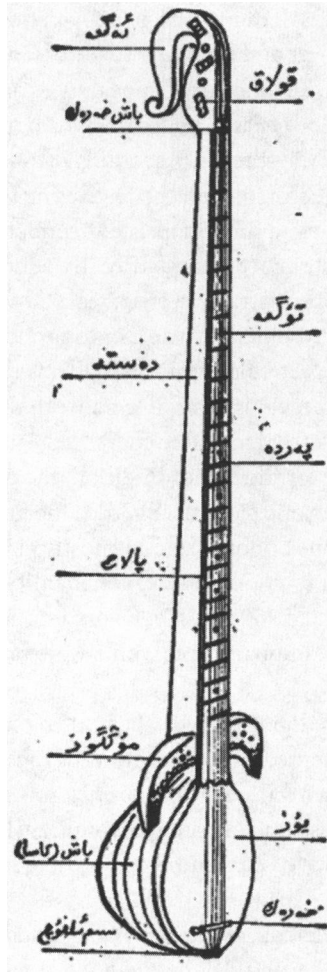


Figure 5. Chaplima rawap, illustrated in *Rawap heqqide sawat* (Basic knowledge about the rawap) by Mamut Qasim (1981, 19).

claimed superiority is often compared to the older, regional varieties, which are despised as poorly made using unrefined materials, reflecting primitive skills, and lacking standardized shapes—all of which have “impeded the development of the rawap” (Song 1987, 20).¹²

To many Uyghur musicians, the modern, collectivized identity of the rawap is often entwined in conflicting historical discourses. I visited a middle-aged Uyghur instrumentalist, who appeared immediately gratified upon learning about my research. He asked, “What [did you say] about the history of the rawap? Who created the rawap?” I explained that my research was not exactly

about history, yet nevertheless mentioned Yüsüp Qadirkhan, a court musician from the sixteenth-century Yarkand kingdom, who is believed to be the creator of the rawap. According to some others, I added, the rawap was derived from the Chinese plucked lute *pipa* or was influenced by Central Asian plucked lutes. He looked perplexed and became a little agitated: “Who said that? Ask him to provide the evidence! The rawap is an old, historical Uyghur instrument, created many centuries ago, even before Yüsüp Qadirkhan. In fact, it has influenced the development of other instruments in the world, including the *pipa*! There’s also a type of rawap in Uzbekistan, but they call it *Kashgar rawap*. Don’t you know why? It’s because that rawap originated in Kashgar!”

His response is indeed rather typical among Uyghur intellectuals today; most find problematic any reference that would make Uyghur culture appear inferior or might undermine its homogeneity. To some extent, the emergence of the modern rawap as a pan-Uyghur instrument has in effect nationalized what was previously a transnational instrument while also collectivizing its regional varieties within a modernist-reformist frame. It corresponds with a strengthening sense of Uyghur collective identity, which has also relied on a similarly dual process of ethnogenesis and modernization in its making (Gladney 2004). In part it interrogates, albeit more often implicitly, what historian James Millward (2005) calls “Chinese Silk Roadism,” a political discourse that connects Uyghur culture to ancient China. Elsewhere I have argued that the genealogical ties claimed for Uyghur muqam and ancient Chinese court music have effectively substantiated the clichéd political message that the Uyghur has always been a member of the family for the Chinese nation since ancient times (Wong 2006b, 157–61). Likewise, the rawap is often described as a descendant of ancient types of the Chinese plucked lute *pipa* from nearly a thousand years ago (see Du and Zhou 1997, 118–9; Zhou Ji 2005, 198; Zhou Jingbao 1994, 42–3).¹³ Almost all Uyghur musicians I have interviewed, on the contrary, vehemently reject any claim to foreign origin for the rawap and defend its indigeneity.

The Model Minority and the Rawap in Film

An important venue for the performance of minority musical stereotypes is the numerous minority-themed films produced since the early 1960s. Considered a preferred medium for state political propaganda, these films often preach about ideas of ethnic solidarity and Communist leadership, and include copious references to politically correct minority stereotypes.¹⁴ The rawap in part owes its pervasive fame to a few of these films, including *Anarkhan* (1962) and the well-known *Bingshan shande laiike* (*Visitors on the ice mountain*, 1963), in which it plays a significant part in the narrative, closely linked to the portrayal of stereotyped minority roles.

Bingshan shande laike follows a clichéd politicized plot: set in southwest Xinjiang in 1951, it centers on Amir, a young Tajik soldier in the Communist armed forces. Portrayed as an intelligent, courageous, and patriotic minority, Amir takes on an undercover mission to probe into an espionage conspiracy of a wicked troupe of minority enemies from an unidentified ethnicity (yet immediately recognizable as Uyghur in a few musical scenes). To the audience of post-1950s Chinese cinema, the ending is a familiar one: led by Chinese commander General Yang, Amir heroically defeats the enemies, rescues his fellow minorities, and saves the country.

The rawap is portrayed in multiple scenes as accompaniment to “minority folk songs” in association with leading minority roles. The opening wedding, for example, is accompanied by a rawap composition called *Yukuai de rawapu* (Joyful rawap) set to an uplifting 7/8 meter and accompanied by dance.¹⁵ Another example is “Bingshan shangde xuelian” (Snow lotus on the ice mountain), a famous minority-style film song written by the prolific Han composer Lei Zhenbang (1916–1997).¹⁶ It is a duet in simple strophic form with 4 verses sung in alternation between the leading female role Gulandamu and the Tajik shepherd Kala who plays the rawap as accompaniment (fig. 6). The portrayal of Kala as a heroic model minority is linked explicitly to the narrative role of the



Figure 6. Kala singing “Bingshan shangde xuelian” (Snow lotus on the ice mountain) in the film *Bingshan shande laike* (Visitors on the ice mountain, 1963) (still capture from the film).

rawap in the film. Kala volunteers to collect intelligence on the enemy, and as the story unfolds, he realizes that his sacrifice is inevitable for the survival of his country. To safeguard the intelligence collected, Kala writes it on a small piece of paper and secretes it inside his rawap. He is then killed by the enemies, but the instrument is smuggled out to General Yang and its hidden data are critical to ultimate victory for the Communist army.

The metaphorical link between the modern rawap and model minority persons is confirmed in the film on at least two other occasions. First, concerning the rawap types, while the Tajik villager Niyaz and his family—the less “enlightened” characters—play the large-sized Tajik Pamir robab (a regional type), the heroic minority characters Amir and Kala—also Tajik—are invariably represented with the modern Uyghur rawap. Second, toward the end of the film, the abhorrent enemy leader—marked by his *doppa* skull cap and dense moustache and beard—appears playing the dutar, whose rather dull sonority presents a stark contrast to the bright timbre of the rawap (fig. 7).¹⁷ Thus the rawap marks what the Tajik robab and the dutar are not: the former symbolizes the desirable future; the latter references a yet-to-be-enlightened past.¹⁸

The minority role portrayals function to moralize the timeless, joyful, singing-and-dancing minority stereotype with a linear sense of historicity. It differentiates the enlightened from the benighted, the forward-looking from the obsolete.



Figure 7. The leader of the enemy playing the dutar in the film *Bingshan shande lai* (Visitors on the ice mountain, 1963) (still capture from the film).

This is mediated by the correspondingly differentiating process of modernist musical reform, which pits certain progressive musical qualities—aptly embodied by the modern rawaps—against older, more traditional styles and practices. Not all minorities, to be sure, are “good at singing and dancing,” and the process of becoming a minority stereotype is as much conscious self-complicity as it is state-imposed. To become a minority stereotype is not only about being subservient and making oneself transformable in compliance with certain state-imposed progressive ideals; it is also about adopting a subaltern subjectivity with social practices and aesthetic codes that mediate among traditional practice, state-framed modernity, and a sense of minority belonging.¹⁹

Artist Dawut Awut and the Concerto *Méning Rawabim*

I want to illustrate this last point by a case study of the legendary rawap performer Dawut Awut (1939–2007), whose name is often synonymous with the modern rawap tradition, and an analysis of the above-mentioned rawap concerto *Méning rawabim* (My rawap), which is arguably the single most important modern Uyghur composition, cocreated and premiered by Dawut in 1964. Dawut was born in Qeshqer Konisheher Nahiyisi (lit., “Kashgar old town’s county” or *Shufu* in Chinese), near Kashgar, to a family of folk musicians. His father Awut Akhun (Rawap) was said to be the best rawap performer in Kashgar. After winning a number of prestigious national awards, Dawut began his professional career in 1957 as a full-time performer at the state’s Xinjiang Gewutuan (song and dance troupe). A gifted musician maintaining a revered tradition, Dawut is remembered today primarily as a modernist who “improved” the rawap and its music. Most of the reform ideas for the rawap described above are indeed his: he replaced the gut strings of older rawap types with more durable steel strings, added two lower strings to make it seven, standardized its tunings, and introduced python skin for the resonating chamber.²⁰ Finally, to enrich expressivity, Dawut developed new finger techniques for both hands and changed the performing position, holding the instrument higher up on the chest for better sound projection (Parhat Dawut, interview with the author, June 2009; see also Abdusami 2001; Song 1987; Zhou, Liang, and Metrozi, eds. 1996, 2273).

Changes to instrument construction were accompanied by reforms to musical style and performing techniques. Through oral tradition, the rawap has preserved a rich repertoire of solo works in the southern tradition, including such titles as “Yaru,” “Tashway,” “Shadiyane,” “Atush,” “Qadir mewlan,” and “Gundipay,” to name a few.²¹ Dawut and a few other notable musicians, such as Qurban Ibrahim (b. 1927) and Rozek Bashi (1897–1973),²² in the 1950s and 1960s, were to reinterpret these works with more challenging techniques,

standardize form and length, and regularize rhythms and meters. Some of these traditional pieces, such as “Tashway,” received even more radical rearrangement. It was drastically modified to accommodate European-style dynamic contrasts, ternary-derived forms, use of equal-tempered major/minor modes, and even orchestration. This version is so far removed from the original that the old one is now called “Kona tashway” (Old tashway) in order to distinguish it from the new version.²³ Dawut’s interpretations have become standard for performers today, who rarely play the older versions.²⁴

Dawut is also remembered as the first to perform a Uyghur instrument—the rawap—with orchestral accompaniment: the 1964 premier of *Méning rawabim*.²⁵ The single-movement concerto is among the most favorite showpieces for Uyghur musicians, and it is regularly programmed in recitals and concerts. It symbolizes the musical modernity characteristic of most post-1950s Uyghur instrumental works. The work is a kind of collaborative creation: Qurban Ibrahim wrote the melody, and Ma Shizeng (b. 1930), a Chinese Muslim of Hui/Tungan ethnicity, orchestrated it. The official account of *Méning rawabim* and its creators deserves mention here. Graduated in 1953 from Central Music Conservatory in Beijing with a degree in piano performance, Ma Shizeng immediately responded to the Communist Party’s call to “develop” the country’s northwestern borderland. He met Qurban, and together they went on a field trip to the southwestern Uyghur town of Mérkit in 1963, where most residents are Dolan, a Uyghur sub-ethnicity. Ma and Qurban were reportedly so impressed by the music of the Dolan rawap that they immediately decided to collaborate on a work for rawap based on tunes collected during the field trip (Ma 2004).

Méning rawabim has little in common with Dolan music, however. Its form is a compound two-part form, with the two principal sections roughly identical in length consisting of a rondolike first section in triple meter, followed by a blissful binary dance in duple meter; the two sections are separated by a cadenzalike virtuosic solo section. The 6-minute composition starts with a brief yet forceful introduction—a threefold descending diatonic sequence in A minor—announcing the main theme. This striking opening melodic gesture is immediately contrasted by the first section, marked *Allegretto Affanato*, which features alternating tutti and solo sections in a noticeably slower tempo with a somewhat somber mood. The opening theme returns toward the end of the first section, now in fortissimo, leading to an almost 2-minute-long cadenza of technically demanding passages performed in an exceedingly high tessitura. The orchestra then returns with a fast binary duple-metered dance marked *Allegro Appassionato*, in E minor accompanied by a syncopated, uplifting 3+3+2 rhythmic pattern played mostly on the plucked strings and the dap frame drum, reminding the audience of the festive mood frequently portrayed in official song-and-dance shows (figs. 8 and 9).²⁶



Figure 8. Dawut Awut (1939–2007), still captured from a videotaped performance on the DVD *Zhongguo minzu yueqi* (Chinese national instruments).

The work also exemplifies the instrumental versatility brought about by modernist reform, which created instruments that are musically malleable and capable of performing in a wide range of styles. One of the qualities of the modern rawap as a plucked lute is its ability to duplicate, through vigorous wrist movement, the sustained melodies and legato phrasing characteristic of bowed fiddles and the human voice—all were largely absent in traditional rawap pieces (compare, for example, “Tashway” to its older version “Kona tashway”).

The musical narrative—realized by its new “voice”—is made to resonate with the political one: the opening *Allegretto Affanato* section, with its somber atmosphere symbolizing the pre-socialist “old society” is superseded in the end by the uplifting dance of the *Allegro Appassionato* section, alluding to the Chinese “liberation” in 1949 as the beginning of a prosperous and joyful “new society.” This interpretation is confirmed by authoritative narratives about *Méning rawabim* contained in official media, liner notes, and concert programs, where it is often described as a work that “represents an old Uyghur artist’s love and praise for the new society through its contrast with the old society” (Yaxinwang 2007). Musically mediating between the old and the new, the lengthy cadenza—one-third the concerto’s total length—provides a sonic path that connects the undesirable past to the glorious present with its advancement and progress, performed on

The image displays a musical score for the piece 'Méning rawabim'. It is organized into three distinct parts, each with its own tempo marking. Part 1 is marked with a tempo of $J = 92$ and consists of two staves of music. Part 2 is marked with a tempo of $J = 144$ and also consists of two staves. Part 3 is marked with a tempo of $J = 144$ and consists of three staves. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings, typical of a Western-style musical transcription.

Figure 9. *Méning rawabim*, the cadenza, showing its three parts, transcribed from a recorded performance by Dawut Awut on LP *Tiyanshan Qarighaylirining yiltizi bir tutash* (Roots of the pines from the Heavenly Mountain are intertwined, 1975) (side b, track 3) (transcription and notation by author).

an instrument that symbolizes musical modernity in every aspect (I will return to the cadenza shortly). As composer Ma Chengxiang (b. 1953) notes, *Méning rawabim* is a musical milestone, which for the first time “employed the Western symphonic style, which has lifted a Uyghur folk musical instrument up to the palace of art . . . It is an exemplar for Uyghur musical creativity and a milestone of minority music to move beyond Xinjiang and advance to the world, something which remains historically significant and bears important implication today” (Ma 2004).

Dawut and *Méning rawabim* also remind us of the enlightened minority stereotypes in the film *Bingshan shande laike*, discussed earlier. Dawut once argued that “as the society progresses, musical cultures of all ethnicities should also develop and be innovative in their forms and contents; conservative and traditionalist thoughts would only impede the development of ethnic music” (Song 1987, 20).

Dawut's exceptional achievements and political compliance have earned him unprecedented national fame that few minority musicians have attained. He was handpicked as a cultural ambassador to accompany top-ranked state officials on numerous trips to European and Asian countries in the 1960s, and enjoyed a brief political career as a member of the political consultative conference (*zhengxie*) of Urumqi (Zhou, Liang, and Metrozi, eds. 1996, 2273). The metaphor of benevolent Chinese help as proclaimed in the film is evident here: Ma Shizeng, despite being only orchestrator of the piece, is often credited as someone who "elevated Uyghur music to an international level" (*Yaxinwang* 2007). In many ways, Dawut and *Méning rawabim* serve as musical embodiment of the stereotyped model minority: both have a premodern past that requires a Chinese-led self-reinvention before they are deemed presentable to the modern world.

Dawut was indeed an integral part of the musical modernity identified with the rawap. Parhat Dawut, son of Dawut Awut and himself a professional rawap performer of the state's Muqam Art Troupe, emphasized to me that his father was deeply involved in the compositional process of *Méning rawabim*, particularly his creation of the cadenza. Because he could barely read notation, Dawut enlisted the help of composer Qurban Ibrahim (Parhat Dawut, interview with the author, September 2009). The cadenza is rarely written out in current performance scores, yet it is apparently fixed and almost never improvised. Nearly all soloists today perform Dawut's original cadenza; indeed there is little variation even among Dawut's recorded performances since the 1960s.

Thus the cadenza is worthy of further attention. Although it is not uncommon to find improvisatory passages in traditional Uyghur music, the nineteenth-century European concerto notion of a virtuosic solo against an ensemble backdrop was largely absent, and the cadenza of *Méning rawabim* is without doubt the first of its kind. The tripartite cadenza stays largely in A minor. The first part, with the rather broken, explorative phrases focusing around E, sounds improvisatory and monotonic. The tempo doubles in the middle part in which the melody with large leaps, exploits the extremely high register; it reaches the very difficult high E, 2 octaves and a major third above middle C—probably the highest pitch ever used for the instrument. The melody then descends to the final part with tuneful gestures, followed by a brief *ad lib* passage before it turns to the *duple dance* (fig. 10).

The cadenza in multiple ways constitutes a metaphor for the process of minority self-reinvention alongside stereotyped representation. Most significantly, it is a musical path that connects the old and the new (symbolized by the first and last sections). The last section, delightful yet technically challenging, signifies an amalgamation of the timeless singing-and-dancing stereotype and the linear, progressive sense of modernity advanced through virtuosity and professionalism. The transformation is as much achieved as ascribed by the bodily praxis

The image shows a musical score for the end of a cadenza and the beginning of the *Allegro Appassionato* section. The score is written in treble clef, 2/4 time, and G major. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'cadenza' and 'ad lib'. The second staff is labeled '(Allegro Appassionata) (♩ = 120)' and includes markings for 'tutti' and 'solo'. The third and fourth staves also include 'tutti' and 'solo' markings. The fifth staff is labeled 'tutti' and ends with a double bar line. The score is transcribed from a recorded performance by Dawut Awut on LP *Tiyanshan qarighaylirining yiltizi bir tutash* (Roots of the pines from the Heavenly Mountain are intertwined, 1975).

Figure 10. *Méning rawabim*, mm. 210–234, the end of the cadenza (ad lib) leading to the last section, *Allegro Appassionato*, transcribed from a recorded performance by Dawut Awut on LP *Tiyanshan qarighaylirining yiltizi bir tutash* (Roots of the pines from the Heavenly Mountain are intertwined, 1975) (side b, track 3). Bracketed metronome and expression markings are taken from the officially published notation *Rewapu duzouqu xuan* (Selected solos for the rawap) (Pettarjan 1980, 1–4) (transcription and notation by the author).

of prolonged practice and concert performance. Instrumentalists I interviewed frequently cite the cadenza as one of the most demanding passages in the Uyghur instrumental repertoire. Virtuoso soloists in the modern time—the best known is the tembur performer Nurmuhemmet Tursun—are frequently recognized as national heroes. In some sense, the cadenza operates as a sound structure (Feld 1984) that coheres with the minority social world, in which musicians, while performing the desired stereotype, also appropriate its discourses of progress and enlightenment to create a subaltern sense of modernity.

The musical modernity cited here rarely involves a passive, unquestioned acceptance of outside influences and the erasure of indigenous elements; rather, there is subject agency. An example is the changing orchestration of *Méning rawabim*. Although the work may be performed with an orchestra of flexible size and instrument—anywhere from small ensembles of less than ten instruments to a full-blown 80-piece orchestra—attempts have been made over the last 50 years to standardize the orchestration. Ma Shizeng's original orchestration from the early 1960s employed a medium-sized ensemble of slightly more than a dozen instruments, mostly Western. In contrast, the nominally standardized orchestration

of today comprises 64 instruments; almost all are Uyghur: 8 *ney* traverse flute in the wind section; 16 *rawap*, 4 *tembur*, 2 *chang* dulcimer, 4 bass *rawap*, and 2 bass *dutar* in the plucked string section; 2 *dap*, 1 cymbal, and timpani in the percussion section; and 16 *ghéjek* fiddle, 6 middle-range *ghéjek*, 4 celli, and 2 double basses in the bowed strings section (Abdurahman n.d.). A survey of existing recordings indicates that Uyghur instruments are now preferred to European instruments in orchestration.²⁷ To be sure, modern Uyghur instruments are “better improved” from those more than half a century ago, with uniform timbres and expanded ranges that work well in large ensemble settings. Yet the replacement of European instruments with “improved” Uyghur ones alludes as well to a concerted effort to redefine sonic dimensions (Tuohy 2001) within the modern Uyghur nation.

The redefinition of a modern Uyghur soundscape exists on an individual level as well, through which minority musicians assert identities that appear to be more personal and particularized. For example, Yarmuhemmet Jamaldin (b. 1950),²⁸ a *rawap* performer and composer, has been an enthusiast, a musical modernist, and a vocal critic of the existing arrangements of *Méning rawabim*, which he complains have been badly done in terms of counterpoint and voice-leading, and have often been performed with instruments that are poorly “improved.” In reaction Yarmuhemmet has created his own arrangement for *Méning rawabim* using computer software to create his ideal timbres for Uyghur instruments. He further changed Ma’s original orchestration by reinforcing the bass line and adding more contrapuntal inner parts. I asked if he had ever performed his arrangement of *Méning rawabim*. “No,” he replied. “Orchestras in Xinjiang are not technically ready to play my arrangement; many performers still don’t follow dynamic markings and other details as notated.” Instead, he intends to perform his orchestration of *Méning rawabim* outside Xinjiang after he retires. To Yarmuhemmet and many other Uyghur musicians, *Méning rawabim* embodies a modern musical history that is yet to be completed, and that requires continuous rewriting.

Méning rawabim symbolizes the best of the Uyghur nation to many. For example, daily Uyghur news programs on Radio Free Asia, run by émigré Uyghur nationalists, include excerpts of *Méning rawabim* as music for the headline voice-over. In many ways, Dawut and his performance of *Méning rawabim* convey a compelling message about minority musicians; how they have confronted stereotypes in order to fashion a unique way of performing their music, of having that music heard, and of being acknowledged as relevant.²⁹ It is no surprise, then, that the most remembered person in the history of the *rawap* is not its putative inventor, the sixteenth-century Yarkand prince Yüsüp Qadir Khan, but Dawut Awut, the virtuosic soloist who successfully transcended the instrument’s original local and premodern identity.

Conclusion

This essay has made three major points. First, the rawap and its music were chosen by the post-1949 Chinese state for its minority modernization project. This circumstance has brought about a homogenized Uyghur musical tradition characterized by a virtuosic and modernist repertoire. Second, the reinvented rawap functions at multiple levels as a musical icon for the successful model minority: simultaneously referencing the musical stereotype of Uyghur as joyful merrymakers and embodying signifiers of progress and enlightenment. Third, such dualities of minority modernity are rarely received only as unwelcome consequences of state policy. Rather, minority musicians have selectively co-opted certain stereotyped representations as aesthetic resources for subaltern performances.

I suggest that the rawap advances a distinctive sonic imaginary, which makes Uyghur listeners mindful of how a traditional instrument, earlier provincial and somewhat obsolete, has been reinvented and elevated to a unifying national icon. While evocative of Uyghur musical modernity, the rawap also carries powerful overtones for nationalist intentions. Listening to the rawap, to some extent, is not only about hearing ethnic or racial difference, but also about perceiving a superiority of progress and enlightenment against a premodern past. Stereotyped representations here serve as contextualized sound icons, through which Uyghur determine how they listen to themselves and how they want to be listened to by others. By no means should this essay be read as an attempt to downplay the hegemony of minority representation. Instead, it has sought to interrogate the ambivalent manner in which minority musical performance has responded to state hegemony, and how such ambivalence is embodied and at once resolved by the convergence of multiple representational strategies which allow for the melding of difference between the regional and the national, the indigenous and the foreign, and the conflicting identities of Chinese nationality and Uyghur in-groups—all remain highly relevant for the Uyghur as well as other minorities in China today. In my opinion it is this multivariate complexity that has kept *Méning rawabim* and the heritage of rawap alive and relevant for the twenty-first century.

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Notes

¹ Steven Harrell (2001, 25–32) provides a compelling analysis of Chinese nationalism and ethnic identity. For brief historical overviews of minority cultural policies in modern China, see Litzinger (2000, 3–8) and Rees (2000, 15–23).

² The same is true for instrumental music. An important part of minority musical stereotyping that is outside the scope of this essay is the rich repertoire of minority-themed

compositions written for modern Chinese orchestra or solo Chinese instruments. Among the most commonly used instruments is the hammered dulcimer *yangqin*, which is often regarded as a close sibling of the Uyghur/Central Asian hammered dulcimer *chang*. Notable works include *Huanle de Xinjiang* (Joyful Xinjiang) and *Jieri de tianshan* (Festive heavenly mountains). The Chinese plucked lutes *pipa*, *ruan*, and *liuqin* are also frequently employed to approximate the sound of the rawap and other Uyghur plucked lutes.

³ For brief introductions to Uyghur musical instruments, including the rawap, refer to Harris (2008, 25–8) and Trebinjac (2000, 190–211).

⁴ Trebinjac suggests that there are few female (and children) rawap performers because, according to her Uyghur informants, the instrument requires extensive use of arm muscles in performance (Trebinjac 2000, 197–8).

⁵ Different musicians and scholars have different explanations for the modern popularity of the rawap. A professional instrumentalist, whose name I choose not to reveal, suggested to me that leaders of the East Turkestan Republic, a short-lived independent Uyghur state (1933–1934) based in Kashgar, had decided to select an instrument from the south to symbolize the Uyghur nation, and the rawap became a natural choice. More research, however, is required to confirm whether the rawap was involved in early twentieth-century Uyghur nationalist movements.

⁶ The Tajik rawap typically has a larger resonating body, while the Uzbek rawap looks similar to the Uyghur rawap and is often considered a variant of the Uyghur rawap rather than a different instrument (Liu 1992, 172–3). The etymological proximity among these Central Asian plucked lutes has also invited music historians to surmise their genealogical connection (Dick, Dobbs, and Poch 2009).

⁷ Notable examples include *Yaru* (adapted from an Uzbek folk song) and a modern composition called *Yukuai de rawapu* (literally, “Joyful rawap”; based on a Tajik folk song). The well-known rawap performer/scholar Pettarjan (1935–1994) is an ethnic Uzbek.

⁸ Precise fretting and temperaments of premodern rawap types are not immediately clear from various oral and written sources. Relatively firsthand accounts can be found in Mamut (1981, 14–21) and Wan (1986, 50–1). It is evident from performance practices observed today that, unlike certain Middle Eastern instruments, no fretting position is reserved for microtonal intervals on the fingerboards of fretted Uyghur instruments. Musicians achieve microtonal pitches through various finger techniques, such as stopping one finger in one position and swinging the next finger onto the next semitonal position, creating a vibratolike oscillating effect. A brief introduction to rawap techniques can be found in Alimjan (2004, 1–10).

⁹ See Song (1987) and Wan (1986, 93–103) on instrument reform.

¹⁰ The chaplima rawap was created by the Ittipaq Milliy Chalghu Eswablar Zawuti (Unity Ethnic Musical Instrument Factory) in Urumqi. It is *chaplima* (stick-on) because the resonating body is stave construction, rather than carved out from a single piece of wood, as is the resonating body of the Kashgar rawap. That is why the chaplima rawap is also called *talaliq* (external, of the outside) *rawap*, and the Kashgar rawap *oyma* (carved-out) *rawap*. It is commonly believed that chaplima rawap was introduced from Uzbekistan, then a part of the Soviet Union, to Xinjiang in the early 1950s by a visiting group of performers and the composer Osmanjan (1932–1990). It is worth noting that the

same instrument is called the *Kashgar rawap* for its assumed Uyghur origin in Kashgar (Tursunjan [1997] 2007, 77).

¹¹ Parhat Dawut the son of the legendary rawap Dawut Awut, maintained that the timbre of chaplima rawap is not bright enough for solo performance (interview with the author, June 2009). It should be noted that scattered attempts were made in the 1960s to establish the chaplima rawap as a concert solo instrument, as symbolized by the well-known solo composition *Tengritaghda bahar* (Spring on Tianshan mountain; *Tianshan de chuntian* in Chinese) composed by the Ghulja-born Uyghur composer Osmanjan (1932–1990) (Osmanjan and Yu Lichun 1965). The attempt, however, largely failed, and the Kashgar rawap remains the favorite solo instrument. The sense of cultural superiority among northern Uyghur is also implicated here: Yarmuhemmet Jamalidin (b. 1950), a Ghulja-born performer and strong proponent of the chaplima rawap, emphasized to me that it is possible to play chord progressions on the chaplima rawap, while most musicians of the Kashgar rawap don't even read notation (Yarmuhemmet Jamalidin, interview with the author, July 2009).

¹² The rawap is certainly not the only “improved” Uyghur instrument. For a brief overview of instrument reform in the 1950s and 1960s, refer to Wan (1986, 93–103).

¹³ The rawap was first recorded in *Lülü zhengyi houbian* (The proper meaning of music theory: a sequel), a Chinese treatise produced by the Manchu imperial court in 1746. It was then documented along with the life and works of Yüsüp Qadir Khan in *Tewarikhi musiqiyun* (History of musicians), a Central Asian historical text compiled by Molla Ismetulla binni Molla Nemetulla Mojiz in 1854/1855.

¹⁴ For studies on the “minority films” produced in modern China, see Clark (1987) and Gladney (2004, 85–98).

¹⁵ These composed “minority folk songs” have played an indispensable role in constructing an exotic minority otherness in modern China. Harris (2005) offers a detailed study of these songs and the controversial Chinese folklorist-songwriter Wang Luobin (1913–1996).

¹⁶ Another “minority folk song” of Lei Zhenbang included in the film is the enormously popular “Huaèr weishenme zheyang hong” (Why the flowers are so red). The song is characterized by its harmonic minor mode with slight pitch-bending on certain degrees in order to mimic the quarter-tonal Uyghur melodic modes, a common technique in appropriating minority songs. It appears three times in the film accompanying scenes portraying Amir's unpleasant childhood (when pure love and friendship were ruined by wicked feudal landlords) and his courage and passion as a Communist soldier in defeating enemies. The rawap appears in one of the scenes accompanying Amir's singing. It also accompanies the singing of two other famous tunes in the film, “Hua'nian zhanyou” (Remembering a fellow soldier) and “Gebitan shang fengsha miman” (Sandstorm in the Gobi Desert).

¹⁷ The musical inferiority associated with the dutar is consistent with the fact that it is rarely received as anything beyond a domestic, if not also amateurish, instrument that is technically too simple for professional concert-hall performance. While the rawap is among the most popular instruments at music conservatories, a major concentration for the dutar does not even exist.

¹⁸ It should not surprise us to learn that the rawap was used extensively in *Qizil Chiraaq* (Red lantern; *Hongdeng ji* in Chinese), the only Uyghur “revolutionary opera,” produced in 1974 toward the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Tursunjan Litip (b. 1950), then an active performer who had played important roles in the opera, emphasized to me that the rawap had been indispensable in both the orchestra and onstage performance. He showed me a black-and-white photo of himself playing the rawap and, with much pride, recalled the way he would play an uplifting solo on the rawap to intensify the atmosphere preceding the singing of the vocal line. I asked if this had been common. “No,” he said. “I had been the first to do it that way and then other people liked it and followed me” (Tursunjan Litip, interview with the author, September 2009).

¹⁹ The relationship between Uyghur music and national enlightenment is also explored in Joanne Smith’s study of Uyghur popular music (see Smith 2007).

²⁰ The use of python skin on the rawap is sometimes credited to Osmanjan, who attempted to “resolve the problem of the volume and timbre uniformity of the rawap” (Gao and Fu 1994).

²¹ Dawut’s performance of these works can be found in a few recordings. The most widely available one is a single CD entitled *Méning rawabim* released by the local record label Nawa Music in 2006; it contains recent studio recordings of 14 solo rawap pieces, all performed by Dawut. Videotaped performances of Dawut, probably made in the early 1990s, can be found on the DVD *Zhongguo minzu yueqi* (Chinese national instruments, 2010).

²² Rozek Bashi is remembered today as a renowned rawap performer who specialized in the narrative genre *qoshaq*. He is also one of the musicians who created the solo rawap tradition by rearranging folk tunes for concert performance; the piece “Atush” being the best known. He became a member of several state performing troupes after 1949, and reportedly performed “Atush” for soldiers in North Korea in 1953 (Zhou, Liang, and Metrozi, eds. 1996, 2256–7).

²³ Named after the late nineteenth-century rawap performer, “Tashway” is a well-known rawap solo. It was rearranged in the 1960s by Qurban Ibrahim, a prolific Uyghur composer well-versed in European musical style, to its modern shape, characterized by an upbeat duple-metered melody laid out in a functional harmonic progression, unfolded in an abridged first-movement concerto form with cadenzalike virtuosic passages. A brief account of the life and works of Qurban Ibrahim can be found in Méhmanjan and Turghun (1995, 249–65).

²⁴ It is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the differences among various original and rearranged versions. It is extremely difficult to find recordings of older versions of these pieces; transcriptions of some are available in Alimjan (2004), Mamut (1981), Tursunjan ([1997] 2007), Wan (1986), and Zhou, Liang, and Metrozi, eds. (1996).

²⁵ Most commercially available recordings of *Méning rawabim* are concert or studio performance by Dawut since the early 1960s (*Yukuai de rewapu*, 1965; *Tiyanshan qarighaylirining yiltizi bir tutash*, 1975; *Music of Xinjiang* 1993; Dawut Awut 2006). The earliest was made in 1964, featuring Dawut as soloist, accompanied by the ensemble of Xinjiang Gewuhujutuan (Xinjiang song-and-dance and drama troupe), on an LP titled *Yukuai de rewapu/Joyful jewap* (1965). It remains unclear to me whether or not this was Dawut’s premiere.

²⁶ Measure numbers and expression markings are taken from Pettarjan's notation (1980, 1–4).

²⁷ It should be noted, however, that Uyghur orchestras are not recent creations. Back in the 1960s, the composition *Tengritaghda bahar* (Spring on Tianshan Mountain; *Tianshan de chuntian* in Chinese), for the chaplima rawap and the orchestra, composed by Osmanjan and orchestrated by Yu Lichun, already employed an orchestra of mostly Uyghur instruments (Osmanjan and Yu Lichun 1965). The piece is said to be the first composition for a Uyghur solo instrument and a “mixed ethnic orchestra” (Gao and Fu 1994).

²⁸ The following discussion comes from my various visits with him since 2004.

²⁹ The audibility of the rawap is sometimes also realized in a literal sense. Abduweli Dawut, a middle-aged dutar performer and folk singer in Ghulja, explained somewhat jokingly to me that the rawap had been the far more popular Uyghur instrument for minority representation because “it is ten times louder than the dutar” (Abduweli Dawut, interview with the author, September 2010).

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