As Bellér-Hann notes, fieldwork in Xinjiang is never free, and involves a great deal of political maneuvering; rural areas and topics dealing with minorities severely compound the difficulty. As noted by Joanne Smith in the July 2006 issue of this journal, a systematic approach is rarely possible. All this makes *Community Matters in Xinjiang* an even greater achievement, and emphasizes the value of her approach: collating existing ethnographic-style material from diverse sources and treating the material as ethnographic data.

*Community Matters* has been a long-term project for Bellér-Hann, and it has both the physical and intellectual weight of a task long pursued. In places, though, notably the Introduction and second chapter (Place and People—a geographical, political and historical scene-setting chapter), the writing style suffers from a lack of zest—often unnecessarily repetitive, with frequent breaks in the flow. These initial problems are very much rectified by the excellent third chapter (Economic and Social Organisation), and the rest of the book makes for engaging reading. I found the sections on marriage and hospitality particularly rich; given that both of these are enduring and important aspects of social relations in almost any culture, a large volume of material is to be expected, but this book showed me that they were much bigger and more complex in pre-Communist Xinjiang than I had previously imagined.

This book has certainly gone a long way towards Bellér-Hann’s initial intention (all those years ago) to “investigate continuities and changes in normative ideals and daily practices of the Turki/modern Uyghur in the course of the entire 20th century” (p. viii), in that it provides a very solid foundation upon which to build such a study in the future. Scholars of Uyghur studies will find this an invaluable reference book, but even those whose focus is elsewhere in Xinjiang or the Turkic world would benefit greatly from reading it.

Tom Cliff  
The Australian National University


This book is essentially a musicological, historical and social analysis of the Twelve Muqam, the series of suites that many Uyghurs regard as the acme of their traditional cultural achievements. Its central research question is how and when these suites entered the national musical canon of the Uyghurs, a Turkic people most of whom live in Xinjiang in northwest China.

Rachel Harris is developing a fine reputation for her work on the past and present music and culture of Xinjiang, and especially the Uyghurs. She has already published a book on the music and culture of the Xibes of northern Xinjiang, and several book chapters and scholarly articles on Uyghur music. This book will certainly add to her reputation.
The coverage is thorough and scholarly. It gives great insight into the suites and to Uyghur music in general. As Harris rightly points out, there are many traditions of this music, situated in a variety of Xinjiang’s localities. There are also *mugam* traditions in other parts of Central Asia, as far as Iran. However, along with scholars like Nathan Light and James Millward, Harris is clear about the lack of significant Chinese influence on this tradition.

In its documentation, the book is excellent. It includes references to sources in Uyghur, English, Chinese and French. It is based on extensive and high-quality fieldwork, as well as a good deal of personal experience in the field of Uyghur music. For instance, the author not only knows numerous musicians well but also can play the *dutar*, the two-string long-necked lute, which is the most widespread of Uyghur musical instruments. Unfortunately, I have not had the pleasure of hearing her play, but I can say that her passion, deep musical understanding and close experience show through in her writing. The book also has quite a few pictures and musical texts. These add to its scholarly value, the pictures being well produced and showing themes and people that add to the interest of the text.

One of the central issues of this topic is Uyghur cultural survival. Harris’ descriptions of her own fieldwork and experiences suggest to me that, though local traditions are weakening, the twelve Uygur *muqam* are very much alive. The extensive Han immigration has not diluted this significantly, and a few of the most important contributors to understanding of the *muqam* are themselves Han. One often hears how the Chinese are destroying Uyghur culture, but there is no evidence for it in this book.

There is a good deal of information and insight about the main performers of the *muqam*. One of them is Abdulla Mäjnun, on whom there is a whole chapter as well as numerous references in other chapters. He comes through not only as a brilliant musician but as an extremely colourful character, who has succeeded in annoying colleagues by his boorishness when drunk but is universally acknowledged for his brilliance as a performer and his work in maintaining and developing the tradition. Fortunately there is a CD illustrating his art, which includes singing and playing on different musical instruments. I spent quite a while studying and enjoying the CD, which was recorded at SOAS in London.

It appears from this treatment that the canonization of the *Twelve Muqam* did not really begin until the early years of the twentieth century, and became tightly interrelated with the nationalisms and politics of the Uyghurs, Chinese and various peoples of Central Asia. The theory popular among the Uyghurs that the *Twelve Muqam* tradition can be traced to the sixteenth century is found to be more likely “an echo of contemporary concerns than historical fact” (p. 137). Of course this is not to deny that there was, from an early time, non-canonical musical performance that developed into what is now known as the *Twelve Muqam*. I found convincing Harris’s verdict that the *muqam* “existed less as an actual body of music, and more as a kind of idealised notion or framework surrounding a much more fluid oral tradition” (p. 138).
There are a couple of minor errors. In the footnote on p. 1, we are told that the 2000 census showed 8,139,458 Uyghurs in Xinjiang, but that since then there has been no ethnic breakdown in the region’s population figures. Actually, there was a 1 per cent national sample survey in 2005 giving populations by ethnic group (Uyghurs in Xinjiang numbering 9,235,040), and the Xinjiang Statistical Yearbooks have annual population figures showing ethnic breakdown.

One of the picture-captions unfortunately contains a small but serious mistake. On p. 37 there is a reproduction of lyrics from a student’s notebook, with a picture of Mao Zedong and another person on Tiananmen facing the Square. The author’s caption says that Mao is with Zhou Enlai. However, anybody familiar with PRC history can instantly recognize Lin Biao, and the Chinese text beside the picture calls him Mao’s “close comrade-in-arms Lin Biao”. The date given is 1976 and it is interesting to find this picture in a Uyghur student’s notebook in that year, given that Lin Biao had already been the target of a full-scale campaign for an attempt to assassinate Mao well before then. It could have been knowledge of this fact that led the author to mistake the picture.

Neither of these mistakes is actually relevant to music. Overall, this is an excellent book and a real contribution to the literature. Rachel Harris is not the only scholar currently researching the Twelve Muqam and publishing on them in English, but she certainly has exceptional contacts and understanding and is producing brilliant and path-breaking research. I recommend this book strongly to those interested in the Uyghurs and their musical culture, as well as the broader question of ethnic cultures, both in China and the wider world in general. I also strongly recommend the book and the CD to music lovers.

Colin Mackerras
Griffith University


Despite its somewhat hyperbolic title, Bell Yung’s respectful biography of his former qin teacher, Tsar Teh-yun, who died in June 2007 just as the manuscript of this book was being finalized, should prove of interest to many beyond the charmed circle of qin players or aficionados. For one thing, we have here a detailed biography of a quite remarkable and independent-minded woman who lived during interesting times and who became both a pre-eminent musician and a reluctant teacher and performer. Born in 1905 in Huzhou County to a family of some considerable local and occasional national prominence, Tsar Teh-yun (in pinyin, Cai Deyun) grew up in Shanghai where her father’s silk business soon took the family. Tutored (mainly at home) from a young age in calligraphy, painting and poetry, Tsar turned to perhaps the most demanding of the traditional Chinese arts, the qin, only in 1941, after she had married Shen Honglai in 1928