



Across the Gateless Barriers: Hyperlinked Farming Poetry in the *Shi jing*

Hsiang-Lin Shih

St. Olaf College

ABSTRACT

Hypertextuality, characterized by its non-linear structure, may have existed before the age of the Internet. Human beings have been able to use “hyperlinks” to cross textual, ideological, and spatio-temporal boundaries—that the *Shi jing* is split into four sections; that under the kings and heroes, the Zhou Dynasty culture was an integration of various voices; and that there is a vast distance between ancestors and us. In this paper, I examine how farming poetry in the *Shi jing* forms a hypertextuality that crosses those gateless barriers. The *Zhou li* started to suggest such a hypertextuality in the *Shi jing*, describing how musicians played the “Bin shi, Bin ya, and Bin song” at multiple ritual times of year to “greet the heat and cold, delight the field inspector, and rest the old.” Differing from the linear program that Ji Zha observed in Lu, an almanac mimesis is suggested here, with seasons signifying both the cycling times to experience the immediate transfiguration and the rotating actors on stage in place of kings and heroes. This paper tracks and “provincializes” reconstructions of such a *Shi jing* repertoire, showing how the *Zhou li* could have recounted it to evoke a Zhou identity, how scholars could have reconstructed it to speak to their times, and how we can further reshape it by including poems that alter the implication of farming poetry. I also “activate” the hyperlinks in the repertoire, from multiple yearly “entrances,” to experience a pulsating rhythm in the farming poetry of the *Shi jing*.

KEYWORDS

Shi jing, farming poetry, ancestor worship, hypertextuality, almanac mimesis

1. Hyperlinked Farming Poetry

Hypertextuality, characterized by its nonlinear structure, may have existed before the age of the Internet.¹ Human beings have been able to use “hyperlinks” to cross textual, ideological, and spatio-temporal boundaries: The textual is the illusion that texts are closed, static, and autonomous;² the ideological is the conventional approaches set by the main discourses in the field; and the spatio-temporal is the vast distance between ancestors and us.³ Such boundaries are obvious in the scholarship of the *Shi jing* 詩經, the earliest anthology of Chinese poems. Textually, it is split into four sections in the received version: the “Airs” (Feng 風), “Minor Odes” (Xiao ya 小雅), “Major Odes” (Da ya 大雅), and “Hymns” (Song 頌). Ideologically, the hymns about the royal houses, the odes about the kingly work, and the airs about multiple states have given an impression that under the kings and heroes, the Zhou Dynasty (1045–256 BCE) culture was an integration of various voices.⁴

*This article is dedicated to Professor C.H. Wang.

¹ According to Laura Shackelford, hypertextuality can be “a figure for narrative complexity that is assumed to transcend its particular, material manifestation in print or online.” Shackelford reminds us that narrative terms are “comparable, not opposed, to those used to characterize the rhetorical forms privileged within digital hypertext.” See Laura Shackelford, “Narrative Subjects Meet Their Limits: John Barth’s “Click” and the Remediation of Hypertext,” *Contemporary Literature* 46.2 (Summer, 2005): 275–310, especially 292.

² María Jesús Martínez-Alfaro tells how the concept of intertextuality arose in the late 1960s, when Julia Kristeva was struggling against “the bourgeois ideology of the autonomy and unity of individual consciousness and the self-contained meaning of texts.” To undermine such an authoritative voice, Kristeva coined the terminology of “intertextuality” and proposed that “any text is the absorption and transformation of another.” See María Jesús Martínez-Alfaro, “Intertextuality: Origins and Development of

In this paper, I examine how farming poetry forms a unique voice—or a hypertextuality—of the Zhou culture. Just as hypertexts form a nonlinear universe on the Internet, so do farming poems in the *Shi jing*. Without activation, the poems are like any other poems in the *Shi jing*, serving as part of the comprehensive, well-ordered representation of the realm. But upon activation at their corresponding times—or entrances—the poems can receive the heat, greet the cold, delight the field inspector, or rest the old, according to a Warring States period (480–221 BCE) ritual text.

By “Warring States period ritual text,” I am referring to the *Zhou li* 周禮, an “idealistic rendering of a complete Zhou-style ritual bureaucracy” attributed to the Duke of Zhou 周公 (fl. 1043 BCE) but now believed to be a work compiled in the Warring States period.⁵ It describes how musicians played the “Bin shi” 鬲詩, “Bin ya” 鬲雅, and “Bin song” 鬲頌—literally, “Bin poem(s),” “Bin ode(s),” and “Bin hymn(s),” which are presumably various parts of the *Shi jing*—as follows:

the Concept,” *Atlantis* XVIII 1-2 (1996): 275, 277; Julia Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, eds. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora et al. (1977; New York: Columbia U. P., 1980), 66.

³ While Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes see the boundless network of intertextuality, Foucault sees the disciplinary role of the networks of power. Martínez-Alfaro observes that Foucault “does not agree with Barthes’ isolation of the text from history and ideology.” See Martínez-Alfaro, 282; Michel Foucault, “The Discourse on Language,” in his *The Archeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (1971; New York, Harper & Row, 1972), 215–37.

⁴ Erica Brindley, *Music, Cosmology, and the Politics of Harmony in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), Part One “Music and the State.”

⁵ Constance A. Cook, *Ancestors, Kings, and the Dao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 150.

The *yuezhang* are in charge of earthen drums and the Bin flutes. On the Mid-Spring day, the musicians beat the earthen drums and play the “Bin shi” [with the Bin flutes] in the morning, to receive the heat; on the Mid-Autumn day, when greeting the cold at night, the musicians also do so. When the state is praying to Field Grandfather for harvest, the musicians play the “Bin ya” [with the Bin flutes] and beat the earthen drums to delight the field inspector. When the state makes the *la*-ritual offering, then the musicians play the “Bin song” [with the Bin flutes] and beat the earthen drums to rest the old.⁶

籥章：掌土鼓，豳籥。中春，晝擊土鼓，歛豳詩，以逆暑。中秋，夜迎寒，亦如之。凡國祈年於田祖，歛豳雅，擊土鼓，以樂田畯。國祭蠟，則歛豳頌，擊土鼓，以息老物。

This performance drastically differs from the linear program that the Chu prince Ji Zha 季札 observed in 544 BCE. According to the *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, when Ji Zha travelled to the Lu court to observe the Zhou music, the songs and dances were performed all in one concert, from those that represent the regional to those that represent the royal.⁷ In contrast, the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” are respectively performed at a ritual that marks a particular time of year, though all to the earthen drums and the Bin flutes. In order to “click open” the “hyperlinks” and hear the agricultural voice of the Zhou culture, one has to wait for the right

time and have the *yuezhang* play the right music.

The problem is that we only know *when* and *how* to click open the hyperlinks, but not *where*. The *Zhou li* does not specify to which *Shi jing* texts the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” refer. Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) suspects that the “Bin shi” refers to poem 154 “Qi yue” 七月 or “The Seventh Month,” and the “Bin ya” and the “Bin song” refer to the other poems “composed to describe farming activities” respectively found among the “Odes” and “Hymns” sections:

The *yuezhang* play the “Bin shi” [with the Bin flutes] to receive the heat and greet the cold—this is already mentioned in [my comments on] the poem “The Seventh Month.” [...] Among the “Odes” and “Hymns,” all the poems composed to describe farming activities can be labeled as “Bin” poems.⁸

籥章歛豳詩以逆暑迎寒，已見於〈七月〉之篇矣。[...] 雅頌之中凡為農事而作者，皆可冠以「豳」號。

To distinguish these farming poems from the poems in the “Bin feng” 豳風 section, I call “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” collectively “the repertoire of Bin.” The “Bin feng” section consists of poems 154–160 in the received *Shi jing*, whereas the repertoire of Bin, according to Zhu Xi, consists of poem 154 (Bin shi), poems 209, 210, 211, 212 (Bin ya), and

⁶ *Zhou li zhushu* 周禮注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1816; Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 367–68 (24.6b–24.8b).

⁷ Alexander Beecroft discusses possible agendas behind the sequencing of the “Airs” in the performance for Ji Zha versus in the received text. See his “Authorship in the Canon of Songs (*Shi jing*),” in *That Wonderful Composite Called Author: Authorship in*

East Asian Literatures from the Beginnings to the Seventeenth Century, ed. Christian Schwermann and Raji C. Steineck, 69–110 (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 82–88.

⁸ Zhu Xi 朱熹, *Shi jizhuan* 詩集傳, ed. Zhao Changzheng 趙長征 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 153.

poems 275, 276, 277, 279, 290, 291 (Bin song).⁹

Bin 邠 is the ancestral land of the Zhou people. What Zhu Xi does not explain is why the *Zhou li* associates farming poems with the ancestral land of the Zhou people. This discrepancy gives rise to other attempts to decipher what the *Zhou li* means by “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song.” Modern scholar Li Shan 李山, for example, proposes to include poems that are supposed to be performed *to the music of Bin* and *about ancestor worship*. He identifies poem 154 with the “Bin shi,” for it is from the “Bin feng” section (presumably performed *to the music of Bin*) and is traditionally read as celebration of ancestors (thus *about ancestor worship*);¹⁰ poems 245 and 250 from the “Major Odes” section with the “Bin ya,” for these two poems are about Lord Millet and Liu the Duke, the early ancestors who are supposed to be worshiped at Bin to the music of Bin; poem 275 from the “Hymns” section with the “Bin song,” for it is also about Lord Millet.¹¹

Arthur Waley also sees ancestor worship in many farming poems when translating the *Shi jing* into English. He not only includes poems seemingly more about ancestor worship in the category of “agriculture,” but also notes that

poem 210, which he puts in the category of “sacrifice,” “deals largely with agriculture.”¹² Waley’s categories differ from the traditional sections of the “Airs,” “Minor Odes,” “Major Odes,” and “Hymns.” In his translation titled *The Book of Songs*, Waley decides to omit 15 poems and categorize the remaining 290 poems into 17 subject matters: courtship, marriage, warriors and battles, agriculture, blessings on gentle folk, welcome, feasting, the clan fest, sacrifice, music and dancing, dynastic songs, dynastic legends, building, hunting, friendship, moral pieces, lamentations. These categories evoke the Trojan War, which was sparked by “courtship” and “marriage” between Helen and Paris. “Agriculture” that follows “Warriors and battles” in turn evokes the generous Phthia, where Achilles, the tired war hero, dreamed of returning to. The “agriculture” category consists of poems 275, 276, 277, 279, 290, 291, 154, 190, 211, 212. Among those, poems 275, 276, 277, 279, 290, 291 are from the “Hymns” section and thus can be part of the “Bin song” (although Waley does not mention the repertoire of Bin at all); poem 154 can be the “Bin shi” (according to Zhu Xi and Li Shan); poem 190 is about shepherding, making Waley’s selection of *Shi jing* poems sound similar to Western pastoral poetry,¹³ and

⁹ Zhu Xi, *Shi jizhuan*, 153, 244, 356.

¹⁰ The “Xiao xu” 小序 (Small Preface) reads: “The Seventh Month’ is to present the kingly work. The Duke of Zhou suffered from a factious incident. Therefore, by presenting how Lord Millet and the deceased lords brought good influences to people, he conveyed how difficult the kingly work had been” (七月，陳王業也。周公遭變，故陳后稷先公風化之所由，致王業之艱難也)。See *Mao shi zhengyi* 毛詩正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, ed. Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1816; Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965), 279 (8-1.7a). Zhu Xi, on the other hand, decided to leave out the “Small Prefaces” altogether and instead focus on the literal meanings of the *Shi jing* poems. See Li Jingde 黎靖德, comp., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), v.6, *juan* 80, 2078–79.

¹¹ Li Shan 李山, *Shi jing xidu* 詩經析讀 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), 363–64.

¹² Arthur Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs* (1937; New York: Grove Press, INC., 1960), 159.

¹³ In Chinese field-and-garden poetry, occupied with grains, vegetables, weeds, chickens, and dogs, sheep and cattle are optional. Western pastoral scenes, however, cannot do without sheep and cattle. See Charles Kwong, “The Rural World of Chinese ‘Farmstead Poetry’ (*Tianyuan Shi*): How Far Is It Pastoral?” *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 15 (December 1993): 57–84. Also see Francesca Bray, “Where Did the Animals Go? Presence and Absence of Livestock in Chinese Agricultural Treatises,” in *Animals Through Chinese History: Earliest Times to 1911*, eds. Roel Sterckx, Martina Siebert, and Dagmar Schäfer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 118–38.

finally, poems 211 and 212 are from the “Odes” section and thus can be part of the “Bin ya.”

If Waley’s translation hooks an audience familiar with the pastoral and Homeric traditions, Professor C. H. Wang challenges the audience: The audience expects to see clash of arms in a Homeric epic, but the heroism in the Zhou culture celebrates rites, music, and agriculture. In other words, agriculture does not only *come after* warriors and their battles, but *goes beyond*. With this cultural heroism in mind, Professor Wang reconstructs from the *Shi jing* an epic titled the *Weniad* (named after the cultural hero King Wen of Zhou 周文王, d.1049 BCE) and a ritual program (dedicated to King Wen of Zhou).¹⁴ Agriculture plays an important role in both the epic and the ritual program. “Farming and sacrifices are brought into a close relationship,” Professor Wang observes, “so close that the only apparent purpose of field work is to honor the deity, [Lord Millet].”¹⁵ The relationship between farming and ancestor worship is reaffirmed. The agricultural part of the ritual program, which Professor Wang reconstructs from the “Hymns” section in the sequence of poems 275, 276, 277, 290, 291, 279, 292, can be

considered the “Bin song”; poems 245 and 250, which constitute the beginning of the *Weniad*, are from the “Odes” section and thus can be part of the “Bin ya.”

For the repertoire of Bin, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200) and his supporters put forward an interesting proposal: Poem 154 “The Seventh Month” embodies the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” in one poem.¹⁶ Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1917) thinks Zheng Xuan’s proposal is not to identify specific stanzas respectively with the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” or “Bin song.” Instead, the entire poem can be performed in different musical modes for different uses.¹⁷ I will come back to this point in section 3.d. For now, we can highlight the hyperlinked repertoire of Bin in the *Shi jing* as follows:

- “Bin song” 豳頌: poems 275, 276, 277, 290, 291, 279, 292, according to Professor C. H. Wang’s reconstruction of the agricultural part of the ancestor worship program.
- “Bin ya” 豳雅: poems 245, 250, 209, 210, 211, 212, among which poems

¹⁴ C. H. Wang, *From Ritual to Allegory: Seven Essays in Early Chinese Poetry* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1988), 66, 73–114, 1–35. What Professor Wang leaves open to interpretation is the relationship between the cultural hero King Wen and the agricultural hero Lord Millet. Both are celebrated in the ritual program he reconstructs, but we are not sure if there are two impersonators respectively representing King Wen and Lord Millet, and if there are, how the two impersonators interact. Presumably, the part dedicated to King Wen and that to Lord Millet are conducted at different locations (the former in King Wen’s temple and the latter in the field) and times (of the day or even of the year).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶ In his *Zhou li* commentary, Zheng Xuan quotes parts of “The Seventh Month” to explain what the *Zhou li* means by “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song.” See *Zhou li zhushu*, 367–68 (24.6b–24.8b). In his *Shi jing* commentary, on the other hand, Zheng Xuan provides

notes related to the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” under stanzas 2, 6, 8 of “The Seventh Month.” See *Mao shi zhengyi*, 281 (8-1.12a), 285 (8-1.19a), 286 (8-1.22a). For Kong Yingda’s note on the discrepancies between Zheng Xuan’s *Zhou li* commentary and *Shi jing* commentary, see *Mao shi zhengyi*, 282 (8-1.13a–b). Generally speaking, Zheng Xuan’s *Zhou li* commentary matches stanzas of “The Seventh Month” more closely with the seasonal changes and farming works mentioned in the *Zhou li* passage. His *Shi jing* commentary, on the other hand, focuses more on the *yinyang* forces and the seniority, which reveals a main concern in his time: competitions between the harem and the hierarchy. See Tamara Chin, “Orienting Mimesis: Marriage and the *Book of Songs*,” *Representations* 94.1 (Spring 2006): 53–79.

¹⁷ Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Shi Sanjia yi jizhu* 詩三家義集疏, v.7 (accessed through Internet Archive <<https://archive.org/details/02073499.cn/page/n2/mode/2up>> on February 23, 2020), 13.12a–b.

245 and 250 are two “Major Odes” about Lord Millet and Liu the Duke, and poems 209, 210, 211, 212 are four “Minor Odes” about farming activities, combining Li Shan’s and Zhu Xi’s proposals.

- “Bin shi” 邠詩: poem 154 “The Seventh Month,” which has been identified with the “Bin shi” by almost all the scholars, but interestingly identified with the “Bin shi,” “Bin ya,” and “Bin song” by Zheng Xuan.

2. From Cultural Identity to Almanac Mimesis

Having highlighted the repertoire of Bin in the *Shi jing*, I would like to revisit the *Zhou li* and examine its agenda. Although attributed to the Duke of Zhou, the *Zhou li* is now believed to be a much later compilation. Its structure and details reflect the “five-phase” cosmology, which was prominent during the Warring States period (480–221 BCE).¹⁸

The Warring States period witnessed various non-Zhou narratives of ancestry, as Constance A. Cook writes:

Ceremonies linked to the worship of by-gone lineage founders were adapted by local courts for the worship of different sets of progenitors and non-Zhou “sage kings” (*shengwang* 聖王), whose cultural

affiliations and political achievements, according to Eastern Zhou texts, predated the Zhou.¹⁹

It could have been in response to the non-Zhou narratives of ancestry in the Warring States period, I argue, that the *Zhou li* evokes Bin. To compete with the other narratives of ancestry, the repertoire of Bin celebrates cultural ancestors (Lord Millet, Liu the Duke, etc.), a cultural way of life (farming), a cultural homeland (Bin), and eventually, a cultural identity. Music and seasons, both of which are essential to the ideal Zhou bureaucracy, also are specified for the performance of the repertoire of Bin. This echoes Li Feng’s critical observation that the concept of a Hua-Xia 華夏 or Chinese nation was not articulated until the downfall of the Western Zhou, “at the expense of a total conceptual exclusion of the ‘barbarians.’”²⁰

As Dipesh Chakrabarty provincializes European history, we can provincialize the repertoire of Bin. Although Chakrabarty’s focus is on the political modernity in South Asia, he also reminds us of something shared in our age of post-colonialism: “European history is no longer seen as embodying anything like a ‘universal human history.’”²¹ Similarly, the cultural identity in the repertoire of Bin does not embody everything about the farming poetry in the *Shi jing*. There is poem 113 “Shuo shu” 碩鼠 or “Big Rat,” for example, which challenges the ideologized

¹⁸ William G. Boltz, “*Chou li* 周禮,” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: The Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), 24–32. Also see Li Ling 李零, *Zixuan ji* 自選集 (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue, 1998), 123, 155.

¹⁹ Constance A. Cook, “Ancestor Worship During the Eastern Zhou,” in *Early Chinese Religion, Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC–220 AD)*, eds. John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowski, v.1 (2009; Boston: Brill, 2019), 238.

²⁰ Li Feng, *Early China: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 178–

80. In his summary of the archeological search for pre-dynastic Zhou, Li Feng also points out the sites “show a typical mixture of cultural elements [...] In fact, recent analyses show that even the dynastic Zhou material culture was no less a body of mixed elements than the pre-dynastic Zhou culture.” See Li, *Early China*, 115 and 117.

²¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

narrative of the repertoire of Bin. Its existence demonstrates there is no uniform, glorious agricultural identity, but a voice that vows to leave for the true happy land. The first stanza reads:

- 碩鼠碩鼠 Big rat, big rat,
 無食我黍 Do not gobble our millet!
 三歲貫女 Three years we have slaved for you,
 4 莫我肯顧 Yet you take no notice of us.
 逝將去女 At last we are going to leave you
 適彼樂土 And go to that happy land;
 樂土樂土 Happy land, happy land,
 8 爰得我所 Where we shall have our place.²²

Moreover, the protagonist in a farming poem is not always an ancestor, a king, or a hero. Scholars have found that sometimes the almanac days, months, and seasons are the main characters. Waley compares “The Seventh Month” to Hesiod’s (fl. 700 BCE) didactic poem *Works and Days*,²³ which proceeds from the gods and heroes to a farmer’s works and days. It differs from epic poetry, Stephanie A. Nelson comments, in its confrontation with the challenges here and now rather than a mythic world:

Homer’s kind of epic poetry described a world of long ago, sometimes even, as in Odysseus’ wanderings, a world of fairytale. The *Theogony* also described a world of prehistory, a world occurring not in human time, but in the mythic time before the order of Zeus. These were the settings familiar to Hesiod’s audience. The *Works and Days*, in contrast, is emphatically set

in human time. It is about how the world is here and now.²⁴

Nelson further distinguishes a farmer’s works and days from the other parts of Hesiod’s *Works and Days* as follows:

At the opening of the poem this “you” was established as Perses, and so it continued, until we reach the farming section. Here Perses drops out. [...] Hesiod has brought together, into one dramatic unity, the stars and winds, the heat and cold, drought and rain, the birds and beast of the forest, the crops and the fields and the oxen who work them, the farmer and his workmen, the small slave-boy and the young girl “still unknown in the works of golden Aphrodite” (WD 521), and a crane, a snail, and an octopus. They are united by the drama of Hesiod’s seasons.²⁵

By drama, Professor C. H. Wang vividly describes the “impulse toward mimesis” in his study of the impersonator in the *Shi jing*. An immediate transfiguration occurred when Agamemnon the hero (or the actor) entered the arena, as well as when King Wen the ancestor (or the impersonator) entered the temple:

As the *kung-shih* [or *gongshi* 公尸, the lord impersonator] approaches and finally enters the temple, the mood of the congregation rises to another height when the musicians play *ssu-hsia* 肆夏. The change in the congregation’s mood in the temple is comparable to that in an amphitheater when the audience sees the actor entering the arena as Agamemnon supposedly would have done. The actor is Agamemnon. The magic of dramatic art

²² Waley’s translation in *The Book of Songs*, 309.

²³ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁴ Stephanie Nelson, *God and the Land: The Metaphysics of Farming in Hesiod and Vergil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 53.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 52, 57–58.

莫匪爾極 Is all owing to your
 perfection.
貽我來牟 You have given us wheat
 and barley,
帝命率育 According to god's order,
 to nourish us all—
無此疆爾界 Not just in this domain or
 that limit,
陳常於時夏 But to spread the regular
 needs all over China.²⁸

The landscape is immense in terms of time, space, and spirit. Grand concepts such as Hou Ji 后稷 (Lord Millet), *zhengmin* 烝民 (thronging people), Tian 天 (Heaven), Di 帝 (god), and Xia 夏 (Chinese nation) are found in one poem. Heaven is connected to the earth. The past is connected to the present. The coverage reaches all over China, “not just in this domain or that limit” (*wu ci jiang er jie*, a longer line that breaks the limit in meaning and in form). The scale and the work are celebrated with the word *wen* 文, which Professor Wang translated as “magnanimous.” Magnanimous also is the land we are from, and the place we are returning to.

The drums and flutes from the imagined homeland continue. As soon as we move on to poems 276 and 277, we hear them exhorting the audience to “Come and help to finish the king's work,/ You who are honorably charged with the job.”²⁹ Although the snow flies at the end of the year, the poems take the audience to the fields at the end of the spring.³⁰ The audience seems to refer to the officials of the

earlier kings, but it also can refer to us who seek to experience the kingly work.

While poems 276 and 277 focus on the spring, poems 290, 291, and 279 display the year-round farming work from clearing the land, plowing the field, sowing, weeding, and harvesting, to wine making and ritual offering. The presence of the ancestor, god, and king is replaced by the presence of the husband and wife, their children, and the old. Note that poem 290 provides a catalogue of participants: *zhu* 主 (master), *bo* 伯 (eldest son), *ya* 亞 (younger sons), *li* 旅 (the mass), *qiang* 疆 (the strong ones), *yi* 以 (the carried; the weak/young ones). The master can be the king, but historians associate the master with the head of a minor aristocratic family or a peasant family.³¹

Interestingly, poem 291 starts with almost identical lines (about sowing) that are found in the middle of poem 290; poem 279 has almost the same lines (about harvesting, wine making, and ritual offering) that are found toward the end of poem 290. Confucius is said to delete the repetitions when compiling the *Shi jing*.³² These repetitions apparently escaped his editorial hands. We see how a set of farming poems could have grown: Lines and stanzas were repeated and branched out, like aerial roots.

The *Zhou li* describes that the “Bin song” is performed to rest the old (*yi xi laowu* 以息老物). Poem 290 has a line “The long-lived is at rest” (*hukao zhi ning* 胡考之寧) that echoes

²⁸ Ibid., 27.

²⁹ Ibid., 28.

³⁰ Ibid., 29.

³¹ Tang Lan 唐蘭, *Tang Lan xiansheng jinwen lunji* 唐蘭先生金文論集 (Beijing: Zijincheng chubanshe, 1995), 212. Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚, *Shang Zhou jiazhu xingtai yanjiu* 商周家族型態研究 (1990; *zengding ben*, Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 2004), 416.

³² Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), 1936–37 (*juan* 47). Also see Martin Kern, “*Shi jing de xingcheng*” 詩經的形成, in *Zhongguo gudian wenxian de yuedu yu lijie: Zhong Mei xuezhe ‘Hongmen duihua’ ji* 中國古典文獻的閱讀與理解——中美學者“巔門對話”集, ed. Fu Gang 傅剛 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2017), 18–45.

the *Zhou li*. Poem 292 has a similar line (*hukao zhi xiu* 胡考之休), but Zheng Xuan reads it as “the good sign of achieving longevity” and Zhu Xi reads it as “the blessing of longevity.” The word *xiu* 休 is read by them as “good sign” and “blessing.” I believe poem 292 about ritual offering is just an “aerial root” branching out from poem 290, and *xiu* 休 in poem 292 is a synonym of *ning* 寧 in poem 290. These poems indeed constitute the “Bin song” as described by the *Zhou li*.

When the imagined drums and flutes cease, the almanac mimesis of the year-round farming work on the homeland also comes to an end. The snow falls even harder outside of the window, but the warmth of the sacrificial wine that rests the old lingers in the ears. The “Bin song” hyperlinks will not be re-activated until next year.

b. When the State is Praying to Field Grandfather for Harvest: To Delight the Field Inspector

We, however, are eager to “binge” the “Bin ya,” which, I propose, consists of poems 245, 250, 209, 210, 211, 212. Poems 245 and 250 are two “Major Odes” about Lord Millet and Liu the Duke; poems 209, 210, 211, and 212 are four “Minor Odes” about farming activities. Since ancestor worship and farming are complementary in reconstructing the ancestral land of Bin, I combine Li Shan’s and Zhu Xi’s proposals, identifying poems 245, 250, 209, 210, 211, 212 with the “Bin ya.”

When the imagined drums and flutes restart at the imagined harvest-praying ritual, we come to the beginning of the *Zhou* epic: poem 245 “Birth of the Men” and poem 250 “Liu the Duke.” Poem 245 celebrates the birth, growth,

and farming work—which includes sacrificial work—of Lord Millet, but there is more: the cycle of agrarian life. The poem reveals in the last two stanzas a self-consciousness that we the audience are performing the same ritual as Lord Millet did:

誕我祀如何	Truly, then, how do we do the sacrifice?
或舂或揄	We pound the grain, we bale it out,
或簸或蹂	We sift it, and we tread it;
釋之叟叟	We wash it the way we hear it sound,
烝之浮浮	And we steam it the way it looks right.
載謀載惟	So we plan, so we calculate,
取蕭祭脂	Offering the southernwood and the fat to ancestors,
取羝以較	And the ram to the spirits of the road;
載燔載烈	We roast it, and we broil it—
以興嗣歲	In order to magnify the coming years.
印盛于豆	We load it in vessels of wood,
于豆于登	In vessels of wood and earthenware.
其香始升	The good smell begins to rise,
上帝居歆	And the god is certainly moved with pleasure:
胡臭亶時	This fine smell is surely appropriate!
后稷肇祀	[Lord Millet] created the sacrifices
庶無罪悔	Which, with hardly any blemish or flaw,
以迄于今	Have come down to us. ³³

³³ Wang’s translation in *From Ritual to Allegory*, 78. Also see Willard Peterson, “Reading *Sheng min*,” in *Ways with Words: Writing about Reading Texts from*

Early China, eds. Pauline Yu, Peter Bol, Stephen Owen, and Willard Peterson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 34.

Having observed the beginning of everything, we follow Liu the Duke to the ancestral land of Bin in poem 250 to explore the plains, hills, hundred springs, sun's movements, ridges, streams, and river bends. But where exactly was Bin? Waley wisely leaves this Bin to imagination. He notes that Bin "is usually placed to the north of the [J]ing; near Sanshui. But I think the word has a much wider sense and means the territory between the [J]ing and the Wei." In addition, he quotes Li Daoyuan 酈道元 (467–527), who humbly states: "Research in the classics and histories shows that these explanations could all be supported by one ancient authority or another. My own knowledge is too shallow, my experience too superficial to justify me in deciding such questions."³⁴ When we almost believe that we arrive at *the* land by activating the repertoire of Bin, we realize we should be like Liu the Duke, who "never had a chance to sit at ease" (line 2 of poem 250).

Finally, we arrive at poems 209, 210, 211, 212, which are also like aerial roots shared not only among the four poems, but also between the "Bin ya" and the "Bin song." The exact wording of "They set to work upon the southern acre. / They sow the many sorts of grain" (*chu zai nanmu, bo jue baigu* 俶載南畝, 播厥百穀), for example, is found in poem 212 of the "Bin ya" as well as in poem 290 of the "Bin song."

What distinguishes poems 209, 210, 211, 212 from the "Bin song" poems is the presence of ceremonial roles:³⁵ lord impersonator (*gongshi* 公尸, who represents the ancestor), descendent

(*zengsun* 曾孫, who holds the ceremony), Field Grandfather (*tianzu* 田祖, identified with Lord Millet or another pre-dynastic figure, Shennong 神農),³⁶ and field inspector (*tianjun* 田峻). In the immediate transfiguration, we are not only working with our ancestors but also worshipping ancestors with them. The boundaries between ancestors and us become further blurry.

In terms of whom to worship and what music instruments to use, there are discrepancies between the *Zhou li* and poems 209, 210, 211, 212. The *Zhou li* reads:

When the state is praying to Field Grandfather for harvest, the musicians play the "Bin ya" [with the Bin flutes] and beat the earthen drums to delight the field inspector.³⁷

凡國祈年於田祖，歛豳雅，擊土鼓，以樂田峻。

Similar lines can be found in poem 211, but it is zithers and drums, rather than flutes and drums, that are specified:

琴瑟擊鼓	We strum zitherns, beat drums
以御田祖	To serve Field Grandfather,
以祈甘雨	To pray for sweet rain,
以介我稷黍	So that our millet may be blessed.
[...]	
田峻至喜	The field inspector arrives and is delighted. ³⁸

and singing about the ceremony. See Li Shan, *Shi jing xidu*, 562.

³⁴ Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs*, 244.

³⁵ Observing the multiple roles in poem 209, Martin Kern reads it as a performance text with composite voices. See Martin Kern, "Shi jing songs as performative Texts: A Case Study of 'Chu ci' (Thorny Caltrop)," *Early China* 25 (2000): 49–111. On the other hand, Li Shan believes it is a poet reflecting on

³⁶ For a note on the "Field Grandfather," see Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs*, 169.

³⁷ *Zhou li zhushu*, 368 (24.7b).

³⁸ Zheng Xuan reads 喜 in this line 田峻至喜 not as 'delighted' 樂 but as 'to give provisions' 饌, which is the reason why he does not read the same line in poem

A question surfaces: To delight the field inspector, do we strum the zitherns, or play the Bin flutes? Yin Jimei 尹繼美 (fl. 1861) raised this question in the Qing times, along with another question about who is to be worshiped in the repertoire of Bin: Field Grandfather, or more immediate ancestors. When Yin Jimei found these discrepancies, he rejected Zhu Xi's identification of poems 209, 210, 211, 212. Instead, he accepted Jin Lüxiang's 金履祥 (1232–1303) identification of poem 250 "Liu the Duke."³⁹ Here I include both Zhu Xi's and Yin Jimei's (followed by Li Shan) proposals, for I assume farming and ancestor worship are complementary in reconstructing the ancestral land of Bin. I do not intend to explain away the discrepancies that Yin Jimei pointed out. In fact, poem 154 "The Seventh Month," which is widely identified with the "Bin shi," embraces discrepancies. I will come back to this point in section 3.d.

c. The Sense: Adversity Would Never Be Entirely Eliminated from Life

Lilah Grace Canevard points out a major difficulty in reading Hesiod's *Works and Days*: It consists of tales of Prometheus, Pandora, the Five Ages, a lazy brother, and a farmer's works belonging to days. It "was performed in its entirety, but was also relentlessly excerpted, quoted, and reapplied." Moreover, "Hesiod gives remarkably little advice on how to negotiate these different modes of reading." Canevard then provides this exciting observation:

154 as echoing "to delight the field inspector" 以樂田峻 in the *Zhou li* passage. See *Mao shi zhengyi*, 470 (14-1.9b) and 280 (8-1.9a).

³⁹ Yin Jimei 尹繼美, *Shi guanjian* 詩管見, v.3 (accessed through Internet Archive <<https://archive.org/details/02073414.cn/mode/2up>> on February 23, 2020), 4.28b–29a.

⁴⁰ Lilah Grace Canevard, *Hesiod's Works & Days: How to Teach Self-Sufficiency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), vii.

The book argues that this reticence is linked to the high value Hesiod places on self-sufficiency, which is consistently foregrounded in the *Works and Days* as the Iron Age ideal.⁴⁰

The so-called Iron Age ideal is eloquently summarized by Stephanie A. Nelson in her comparison of Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Virgil's *Georgics*. She observes how Virgil's longing for the golden age, as well as the later Christian idea of a lost paradise, overshadow a distinct quality of Hesiod's *Works and Days*: an awareness of sustainability, which our race of iron is entrusted to foster. Admittedly, farming is never easy. Our race of iron is not privileged as were those of the former ages—the Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Hero—which do not require sweat and tears in the field. Still, Hesiod argues, Zeus hides livelihood in the works and days for us:

For now indeed is the race of iron, and never a day's space shall they cease from toiling and wretchedness, nor have a night without continuity of destruction; the gods will give them gnawing anxious cares. Yet even in their evils there shall be a mixture of good.⁴¹

Hesiod's *Works and Days* continues with a long harangue, the first few lines of which read:

180 Zeus will destroy these also, this race of mortal men,

⁴¹ For the translation by David Grene, see Nelson, *God and the Land*, 13–14. For Nelson's comparison of Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Virgil's *Georgics*, see her "Hesiod, Virgil, and the Georgic Tradition," in *The Oxford Handbook of Hesiod*, eds. Alexander C. Loney and Stephen Scully (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 368–76.

when even at their birth they shall be grey
 at the temples;
 when father shall not be at one with his
 children nor they with him,
 nor guest with host nor friend with friend
 nor brother
 shall be friendly as before. These people
 shall dishonor
 their parents, even at the moment of aging;
 they will fault them
 with words of abuse. Cruel, they will know
 nothing of the god's vengeance.

In the same didactic and firm tone, Hesiod's poem describes the justice of Zeus and its close relationship with farming. There is thus a balance between the self-sufficiency of our race of iron and the wrath of Zeus. The didactic tone is exactly the reason why Plato believes Hesiod's *Works and Days* is beneficial for the young, whereas Homeric poems about gods, kings, and heroes are not.⁴²

Comparable to the didactic message is the *youhuan yishi* 憂患意識 of the Zhou culture, or "a *sense* that adversity would never be entirely eliminated from life,"⁴³ which is evoked by poem 113 "Big Rat" for the audience of the repertoire of Bin. The singer(s) threatens to leave the "big rat" just as Hesiod threatens his lazy, greedy brother that people like him will be destroyed. Those who neglected their duties would be forced to "log out" from the hypertextuality and listen:

碩鼠碩鼠	Big rat, big rat,
無食我苗	Do not eat our rice-shoots!
三歲貫女	Three years we have slaved for you,
20 莫我肯勞	Yet you did nothing to reward us.

⁴² Robert M. van den Berg, "Proclus on Hesiod's *Works and Days* and 'Didactic' Poetry." *The Classical Quarterly* 64.1 (May 2014): 383–97.

逝將去女	At last we are going to leave you
適彼樂郊	And go to those happy borders;
樂郊樂郊	Happy borders, happy borders,
24 誰之永號	Where no sad songs are sung. ⁴⁴

In reconstructing an epic of the Zhou people, Professor Wang sensibly associates poem 113 "Big Rat" with poem 250 "Liu the Duke" (discussed above in the "Bin ya"). Despite the huge gap between the two poems—poem 250 about a pre-dynastic Zhou hero and poem 113 about a late Zhou tyrant—Professor Wang sees their common goal: to go to those happy borders, so that we will stop long pining (*er wu yongtan* 而無永歎); having arrived there, who would long wail (*shei zhi yonghao* 誰之永號)?⁴⁵ By linking the two poems, Professor Wang implies the happy borders mentioned in poem 113 are Bin, where Liu the Duke in poem 250 settled his people and revived Lord Millet's agricultural work. To regain the self-sufficiency bestowed on our race of iron, one has to log out from the celebrative repertoire from time to time, and keep in mind the sense that adversity would never be entirely eliminated from life.

d. On the Mid-Spring/Autumn Day: To Receive the Heat/Greet the Cold

According to the *Zhou li*, the "Bin shi" is performed on the Mid-Spring morning and the Mid-Autumn night, to the earthen drums and Bin flutes, in order to receive the heat or greet the cold. Poem 154 "The Seventh Month" has been identified with the "Bin shi" by almost all the scholars.

⁴³ For the definition, inspired by Hsü Fu-kuan 徐復觀, see Wang, *From Ritual to Allegory*, 114.

⁴⁴ Waley's translation in *The Book of Songs*, 309.

⁴⁵ Wang, *From Ritual to Allegory*, 86.

In his category of the “phenomenal calendars and almanacs,” Joachim Gentz juxtaposes the *Shi jing* poem “The Seventh Month” with 1) the “Yao Dian” 堯典 chapter of the *Shang shu* 尚書, 2) the *Xia xiaozheng* 夏小正 (which became a chapter of the *Da Dai Li ji* 大戴禮記), and 3) the “Yue ling” 月令 fragments of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書.⁴⁶ Admittedly, “The Seventh Month” records the visible continuous changes of heaven and earth as the rest do. However, instead of starting with the first month or the spring, the poem starts with the seventh month when “Scorpio is sinking below the horizon at the moment of its first visibility at dusk”:⁴⁷

七月流火 In the seventh month the Fire ebbs;
九月授衣 In the ninth month I hand out the coats.

As if the first two lines are not surprising enough, the poem switches to another calendar system in its third and fourth lines:

一之日鬻發 In the days of the First, sharp frosts;

⁴⁶ According to Gentz, the “Yue ling” 月令 fragments of the *Yi Zhou shu* 逸周書 are different from the “Yue ling” 月令 chapter in the *Li ji* 禮記, for the latter is an amalgamation of the phenomenal and the agent cyclical systems. See his chapter “The Ritual Meaning of Textual Form: Evidence from Early Commentaries of the Historiographic and Ritual Traditions,” in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: University of Washington Press), 138.

⁴⁷ From this point on is Waley’s translation in *The Book of Songs*, 164–67, with minor changes in the translation of line 11 田峻至喜 to be consistent with my discussion of the same line elsewhere. For notes on the Fire/Scorpio, see Waley, trans., *The Book of Songs*, 164; Fang Yurun 方玉潤, “Qiyue liuhuo zhi tu” 七月流火之圖, in his *Shi jing yuanshi* 詩經原始 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 15. For an archaeological/anthropological analysis, see Ian

4 二之日栗烈 In the days of the Second, keen winds.

The traditional commentaries tell us that the “# *yue*” expressions belong to the calendar system of the old Xia times, whereas the “# *zhi ri*” expressions refer to the Zhou calendar.⁴⁸ While other phenomenal calendars and almanacs attempt to be systematic, this poem resists chronological order and embraces discrepancies.

What adds to the complexity is that several stanzas in the poem are “hyperlinked.” The first stanza, for example, begins by “greeting the cold” (rhyme groups A and B) but ends by “delighting the field inspector” (rhyme group C)⁴⁹—the former is the function of the “Bin shi” and the latter, the function of the “Bin ya” upon activation:

七月流火 (A)
九月授衣 (A)
一之日鬻發 (B)
4 二之日栗烈 (B)
無衣無褐 (B)
何以卒歲 (B)
三之日于耜 (C)
8 四之日舉趾 (C)

Gilligan, *Climate, Clothing, and Agriculture in Prehistory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), which argues “fiber production and the advent of woven fabrics, developed in response to global warming, were pivotal to the origins of agriculture” (see the back-cover blurb of the book).

⁴⁸ The many calendar systems in early China can mean complicated political ideologies. See Ch’ en Meng-chia 陳夢家, “The Greatness of Chou (ca. 1027–ca. 221 B.C.),” in *China*, ed. Harley Farnsworth MacNair (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946), 70–71; David W. Pankenier, “The Cosmo-Political Background of Heaven’s Mandate,” *Early China* 20 (1995): 160, note 79.

⁴⁹ William H. Baxter, *A Handbook of Old Chinese Phonology* (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), Appendix B.

同我婦子 (C)
 饁彼南畝 (C)
 田峻至喜 (C)

- In the seventh month the Fire ebbs;
 In the ninth month I hand out the coats.
 In the days of the First, sharp frosts;
 4 In the days of the Second, keen winds.
 Without coats, without serge,
 How should they finish the year?
 In the days of the Third they plough;
 8 In the days of the Fourth out I step
 With my wife and children,
 Bringing hampers to the southern acre
 Where the field inspector arrives and is
 delighted.

As for the last stanza, it begins by cutting the ice and ends by toasting to the lord's longevity. These are associated with "resting the old," the function of the "Bin song" upon activation:

- 二之日鑿冰沖沖 (A)
 三之日納于凌陰 (A)
 80 四之日其蚤 (B)
 獻羔祭韭 (B)
 九月肅霜 (C)
 十月滌場 (C)
 84 朋酒斯饗 (C)
 曰殺羔羊 (C)
 躋彼公堂 (C)
 稱彼兕觥 (C)
 88 萬壽無疆 (C)

- In the days of the Second they cut the ice
 with tingling blows;
 In the days of the Third they bring it into
 the cold shed.
 80 In the days of the Fourth very early
 They offer lambs and garlic.

- In the ninth month are shrewd frosts;
 In the tenth month they clear the
 stackgrounds.
 84 With twin pitchers they hold the village
 feast,
 Killing for it a young lamb.
 Up they go into their lord's hall,
 Raise the drinking-cup of buffalo-horn:
 88 "Hurray for our lord; may he live for ever
 and ever!"

The variety of functions within one poem—and sometimes even within one stanza—reminds us of Zheng Xuan's proposal that "The Seventh Month" is *the* poem that embodies the "Bin shi," "Bin ya," and "Bin song." How does this work? As mentioned toward the end of section one, Wang Xianqian believes "Bin shi," "Bin ya," and "Bin song" refer to different musical modes. When performed in the "Bin shi" mode, the poem is to receive the heat and greet the cold; when performed in the "Bin ya" mode, the poem is to delight the field inspector; when performed in the "Bin song" mode, the poem is to rest the old. This is close to the concept of hyperlinks. Only when activated in the right way, the hyperlinks can lead us to somewhere else. I would argue, however, that timing is as important as music in activation. While the music of Bin is to cross the spatial barriers and transport the audience back to the ancestral land,⁵⁰ the rotation of seasons is to cross the temporal.

I would also argue that "The Seventh Month" is not the only hyperlinked text in the repertoire of Bin. Together with the texts discussed above, it forms an expansive agricultural hypertextuality in the *Shi jing*. The rhyme words of *lie* 烈 and *sui* 歲 in stanza 1 (underlined below), for example, are already

⁵⁰ Fu Ssu-nien 傅斯年 observes that the state of Bin in the *Shi jing* is the "new state of Bin" in the east (i.e. the state of Lu), rather than the old state of Bin in the west. See his *Shi jing jiangyi gao* 詩經講義稿 (1929; Taipei:

Wunan, 2013), 59–60. When the Zhou people moved east, the music of Bin could presumably "transport" them back to the ancestral land.

seen (or heard) in poem 245 “Birth of the Men” in the “Bin ya”:

載燔載烈 We roast it, and we broil it--
以興嗣歲 In order to magnify the
coming years.

Although now, very different senses are displayed (also underlined for comparison):

一之日鬻發 (B)
二之日栗烈 (B)
無衣無褐 (B)
何以卒歲 (B)

In the days of the First, sharp frosts;
In the days of the Second, keen winds.
Without coats, without serge,
How should they finish the year?

The rhyme words of Rhyme group C in stanza 1 are even more familiar, as underlined here: 三之日於耜，四之日舉趾。同我婦子，饁彼南畝。田峻至喜。 We have repeatedly seen (or heard) the same rhyme words in the “Bin ya” and the “Bin song,” as underlined below:

Poems 211 and 212 (Bin ya):
曾孫來止，以其婦子，饁彼南畝。田峻至喜。

Poem 211 (Bin ya):
今適南畝，或耘或耜。黍稷薿薿。攸介攸止，烝我髦士。

Poem 212 (Bin ya):
以我覃耜，俶載南畝。

Poem 290 (Bin song):
侯彊侯以，有嘏其饁。思媚其婦，有依其土。有略其耜，俶載南畝。

Poem 291 (Bin song):
畎畹良耜，俶載南畝。

Whoever composed the above poems must have had the “secret recipe” of these underlined rhyme words 耜以趾止籽子畝婦士喜薿 in mind. In Roland Barthes’ words, the rhyme words are the “anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read* [or *heard*].”⁵¹ Sharing this recipe, the singer(s) of poem 154 uses it to grow the agricultural universe with even more entrances.

If the entire poem mostly embraces discrepancy and hypertextuality, stanza 5 finds its own way to stick to the same rhyme while giving a continuous sequence of months from the fifth to the tenth:

五月斯螽動股 (A)
六月莎雞振羽 (A)
七月在野 (A)
48 八月在宇 (A)
九月在戶 (A)
十月蟋蟀入我牀下 (A)
穹窒熏鼠 (A)
52 塞向墜戶 (A)
嗟我婦子 (A)
曰為改歲 (A)
入此室處 (A)

In the fifth month the locust moves its leg,
In the sixth month the grasshopper shakes its wing,
In the seventh month, out in the wilds;
48 In the eighth month, in the farm,
In the ninth month, at the door.
In the tenth month the cricket goes under my bed.
I stop up every hole to smoke out the rats,

⁵¹ Martínez-Alfaro, “Intertextuality,” 278; Roland Barthes, “From Word to Text,” in his *Image-Music-*

Text, trans. Stephen Heath (1977; London: Fontana, 1990), 160.

Plugging the windows, burying the doors:

- 52 ‘Come, wife and children,
The change of the year is at hand.
Come and live in this house.’

The sixth line of this stanza is strikingly long, and thus some editions separate it into two lines. However, all the stanzas in “The Seventh Month” consist of eleven lines, and all the lines in “The Seventh Month” rhyme (which means, share the same rhyme at least with another line). 蟀 in the middle of 十月蟋蟀入我牀下 does not rhyme with 下 or any other lines in the stanza, so it is almost impossible to take the first four syllables 十月蟋蟀 as a separate line. The unusual long line of 十月蟋蟀入我牀下, on the other hand, can mark a splendid end to the surprisingly uninterrupted sequence of months.

The concluding stanza, as quoted earlier, is also interesting in balancing the choice of seasonal experiences with the choice of rhymed expressions. The formulaic expression “May he live for ever and ever!” (*wanshou wujiang* 萬壽無疆) is a good choice for a concluding line, not only because it concludes a farming cycle well, but also because it rhymes with many words.⁵² With the words that rhyme with 疆 in mind, we are nervous when the stanza starts with a different rhyme group, and get even more nervous when the rhyme changes in the third line of the stanza but does not seem to go any closer. Finally, when we hear the fifth line, which rhymes with 萬壽無疆, we burst into a smile knowing we are on track. When the penultimate line prompts us to “raise the drinking-cup of buffalo-horn,” we are all ready to shout out the last line: “May he live for ever and ever!”

According to the *Zhou li*, the “Bin song” hypertext is activated to the earthen drums and Bin flutes “when the state makes the *la*-ritual offering.” If both Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi are right with their identification of the “Bin song,” when poems 275, 276, 277, 290, 291, 279, 292 and poem 154 are activated to the earthen drums and Bin flutes in the season of *la*-ritual offering, we can experience the immediate transfiguration brought about by the almanac mimesis. How different the experience would it be from Ji Zha’s experience at the Lu concert! It would be more like Lin Daiyu in the *Dream of the Red Chamber* hearing a scene from the music-drama *Peony Pavilion*. The performance is fragmental, *in medias res*, but because a young lady’s life, like an almanac cycle, is an experience shared across individuals, the audience is able to recognize where they are and enter the hypertextuality.



To such a cycle, there is no single entrance, especially when we consider how each of us was born to this world: on different days of different months, but we joined the

almanac cycles anyway. If we join the almanac cycle at the end of the year, we toast to a long life. If we join in the seventh month when “Scorpio is sinking below the horizon at the moment of its first visibility at dusk” (stanza 1), we prepare clothes to greet the cold. And so on. When another season approaches and enters the arena of the world, and when the drums and flutes from the imagined homeland sound, we hold our breaths, ready to cross the gateless barriers and experience a pulsating rhythm in the farming poetry of the *Shi jing*.

⁵² Deng Peiling 鄧佩玲, *Tianming, guishen yu zhudao: Dong Zhou jinwen guci tanlun* 天命、鬼神與祝禱—

—東周金文嘏辭探論 (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 2011), 171–74.