



Undergraduate assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

Student Name: Kehan Dong	
Module Code: SIC6017	Student number: 2016148
Module title: Exegesis	
For completion by marker: Comments:	
Marker's signature:	Date:
Provisional mark: NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the final examination board.	

IS THE WORD *SHOUSHU* 首鼠 RELATED TO MICE?



Module code: SICH6018

Module tutor: Prof. Chou Pi-Hsiang

Student name: Kehan Dong

Student ID: 2016148

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1. Where the Word *Shoushu* Comes From
 2. Annotations of the Word *Shoushu*
 3. Disyllabic Word: *Shoushu*
 4. Conclusion
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Shoushu liangduan 首鼠兩端

—*The Records of the Grand Historian* 史記

You and I went against an old man who lost his power, why were you still hesitating between me and *Douying*!

與長孺共一老禿翁，何為首鼠兩端？

— *The Records of the Grand Historian* 史記

You and I went against an old man who lost his power, why were you still **hesitating** between me and *Douying*!

與長孺共一老禿翁，何為**首鼠** (*Shoushu*)兩端？

– *The Records of the Grand Historian* 史記

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to hesitate

Shoushu, means moving forwards and moving backwards.

首鼠，一前一卻（卻）也。

– *Honshu yinyi* 漢書音義

The old saying is that mice are suspicious and do not come out of their burrows decisively, one at each of the two ends.

Characteristics of Mice

舊說鼠性疑，出穴多个未，故持两端為之目鼠。

— Biya, Shichong 埤雅·釋蟲

Houhai

Annota

Xiqiang

‘*Shoushi* 首施’
A Different Way of Constructing the Word ‘*Shoushu* 首鼠’

— *Jieyin biji* 芥隱筆記

Shoushu means ‘moving forwards and moving backwards’ A scholar wrote to his friend: ‘I was stranded in the Central Plains, about six years from beginning to end.’ Here, *Shoushu* means ‘the beginning and end’ instead of ‘moving forwards and moving backwards’

首鼠，猶言進退耳.....一士人與朋舊書云：「滯留上國，首鼠六年。」乃作首尾解，則非進退之謂也。

Shoushi, *Shoushu*, mean hesitating....首施，首鼠...猶豫...遲疑也。

— *Pianya* 駢雅

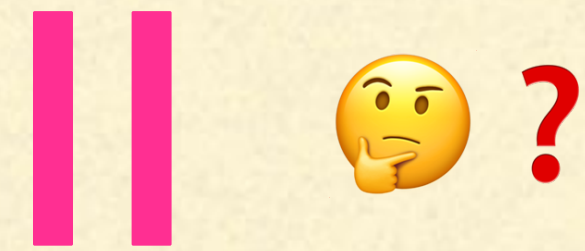
Shoushu means the ‘the beginning and end’.

‘*Shoushu liangduan*’ is ‘the two sides of the beginning and end’ , which is like ‘looking forward and backward (be over-cautious and indecisive)’. This explanation makes sense.

首鼠，亦即首尾之意。

「首鼠兩端」即言「首尾兩端」，猶言「瞻前顧後」，此解可通。

*Shou**shu* 首鼠

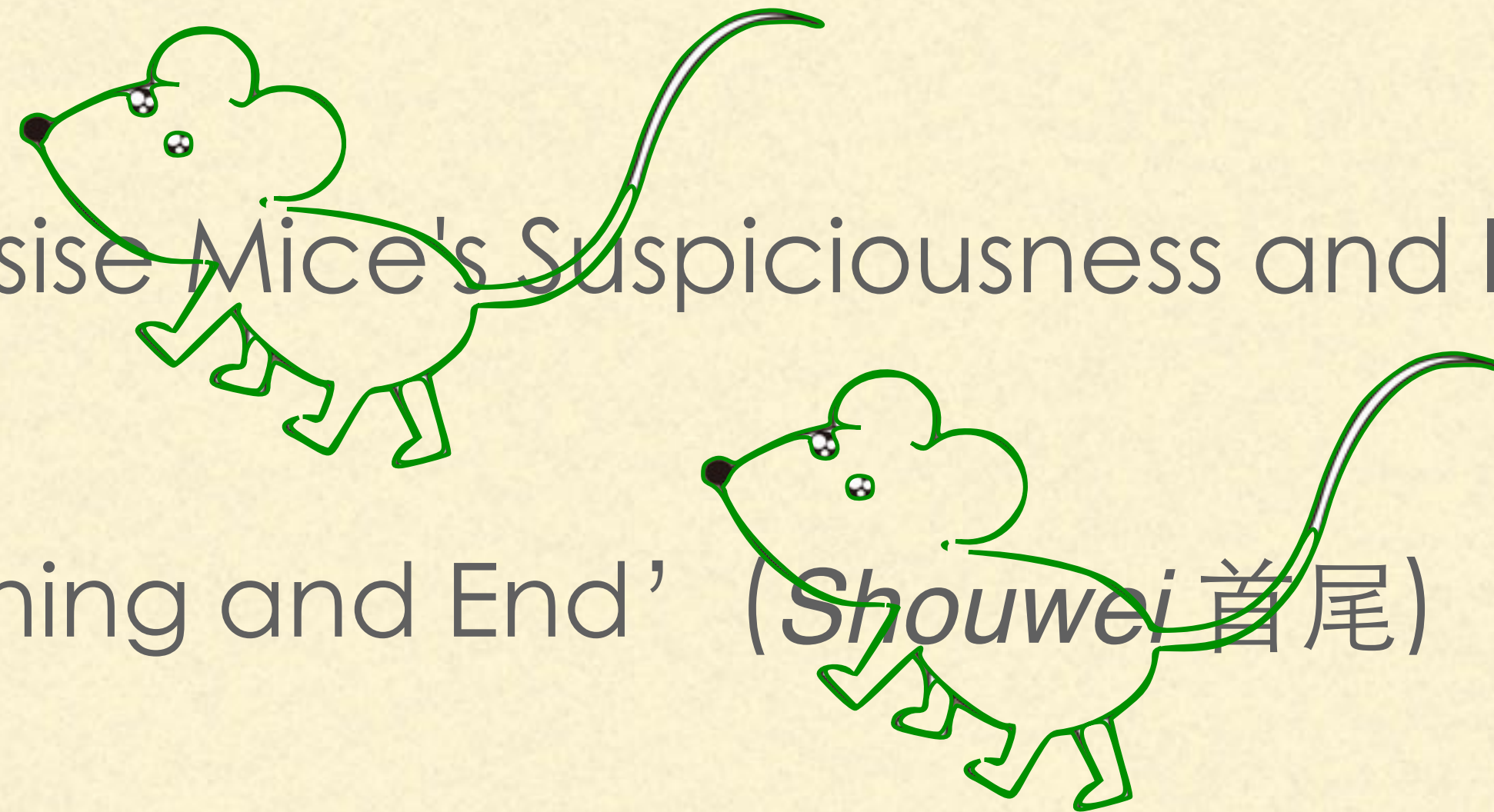


1. Moving Forwards and Moving Backwards (*Jintui* 進退)

2. To Emphasise Mice's Suspiciousness and Indecisiveness.

3. The Beginning and End' (*Shouwei* 首尾)

To Hesitate



Shu (mice 鼠) = *Wei* (tail 尾) = End

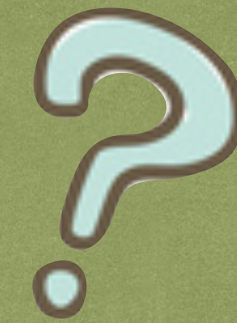
Shoushu liangduan

首鼠兩端

The two sides of the

To hesitate

- Because of the *long* *tail*
以鼠尾長故，故古



Shoushu 首鼠 = *Shoushi* 首施
WHY?

- Mice are famous for their *tails*.
鼠以尾名.

—Huang Kan 黃侃

— Lu Zongda 陸宗達, Wang Ning 王寧, Meng Zhuo 孟琢



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Word	Old Chinese	The Reconstruction of Old Chinese (Zhou Fagao周法高)	
<i>Shoushu</i> 首鼠		<i>*st^hjəw</i>	<i>*st^hjaɣ</i>
<i>Shoushi</i> 首施		<i>*st^hjəw</i>	<i>*st^hjia</i>

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CONCLUSION

- The word *Shoushu* 首鼠 has nothing to do with mice.
 - No fixed characters
 - The characters *Shoushu* are used to show the word's pronunciation.
 - Single-morpheme word
 - *Shoushu* is a disyllabic word that uses sound to express meaning.
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Thank you for listening ♡♡

