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Sex and Love: A Buddhist Perspective (「性」與「愛」的佛法觀點)

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BIOGRAPHY
Lu Qiong-zhao is her name before becoming a nun. Shih’s family is originated from the Guangdong Mei Province. Shih was born in Yangon, Burma and back to Taiwan in 1965. In 1975, Shih graduated from the Taipei Public Zhong Shan Girls’ Secondary School. She was then admitted with the highest-flying scores in class to the department of Chinese Literature of the National Taiwan Normal University, which was her first priority of choices. In 1978, aged 21, Shih began leading a life of nun in the university year-three summer
and graduated from the National Taiwan Normal University in 1979. Shih passed the requirements of monastic disciplines in Gaoxiong Long Quan Temple.

Shih taught Chinese literature in high schools and gave lectures in many Buddhist institutes. Shih had been teaching in Fu Jen Catholic University since February 1994. Her publication *The Ethics of Buddhism* gained her the qualification of lecturer, which was conferred by the Qualification Assessment Committee of the Educational Bureau. It is uncommon for a person who obtains the qualification of lecturer not by one’s academic qualification but the academic strength one manifests. Shih’s established a precedent. Since September 1997, Shih has been teaching in the Religion Studies Institute, Social Sciences Faculty of the Husan Chuang University and served as the master of guidance for the Buddhist Hong Shi Institute. In August 2002, Shih was conferred the qualification of associate professor with her work *A Contemporary Interpretation of Disciplines* by the Qualification Assessment Committee. In June 2005, Shih was granted the qualification of professor with her work *The Normative Ethics of Buddhism*, assessed and passed by the committee. Shih is now serving as a professor for the Department of Religion Studies and the research institute at the Husan Chuang University. Shih founded the “Applied Buddhist Ethics Research Centre” at the Husan Chuang and took up the post of its director.

Master Shih initiated a number of nationwide and high-profile social advocacy. The “Guanyin statute” incident in March 1994 and the “campaign for making the birthday of the Buddha a public holiday” in 1999 are, among others, most well-known to the Buddhist community both at home and abroad.

From 1993 to 1999, while holding the post of the founder council of the Republic of China (Taiwan) Caring Life Association, Shih advocated the legislation of animal protection ordinance against cruelty and abuse of animals and therefore spread the Buddhist belief in the equality of all living things. In her tenure, Shih built networks in the society and had the “wide animals protection ordinance” and the “animals protection ordinance” passed by the Legislative Yuan. Shih’s advocacy of animal rights gained her much applause.

In addition, Master Shih often writes articles “in the Buddhist perspective” in a number of newspapers in relation to environmental conservation, ecological preservation, safeguarding of human rights, anti-legalization of gambling and the relations between religion and politics. Shih’s articles are well received by the public. Shih’s active participation in the down-to-earth social movements out of her hectic schedule makes a precedent in the Buddhist community.

In the early 1998, Shih founded the “Hong Shi Culture and Education Foundation” and held the post of its first board member. The foundation was established to cultivate human resources for the development of Buddhist temples. From 1996 to 2006, the foundation organized 6 large-scale conferences on “the Theory and Practice of Master Shun Yin's Thoughts” which were widely recognized in the Buddhist and academic community.

In March 1999, Shih was invited by Mayor Peng Bai-xian of Nan Tou Province to hold the post of the vice-Province Mayor. However, Shih declined his invitation by the principle of separation of religion and politics she has consistently stuck to.

On 3rd March 2001, Shih openly urged Dalai Lama, who had scheduled to pay a religious
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visit to Taiwan that day after, to keep up his work and re-establish the nunnery system of Tibetan tradition. On 31st, Shih announced the “abolition of the eight principles of respect declaration” in the opening ceremony of the ninety-six old age of Master Shun Yin’s “Buddhism on the Earth and its Inheritance” academic conference. Shih had eight people tear away the “eight principles of respect” on stage, proclaiming that the principles are not the words from the Buddha and urge those who truly embrace the Buddha’s ideal of equality to abolish such discriminatory and unequal principles against women.

From July to August 2003, Shih wrote three articles expressing objection to the “teaching demonstrations of killing pigs” in the aboriginal community university. Shih also persuaded President Chen not to kill a pig as a sacrificial offering for the Hakka’s worship ritual, which sparked severe controversy as it touched the sensitive nerve of the ethnic community. However, it did bring attention to the public of the inhuman treatments that animals receive in the religious worship rituals.

At the end of 2004, Shih wrote articles and held a press conference criticizing Nan Tou Dan Da Lin park for opening its hunt policy. Shih’s stance attracted fierce attack by the aboriginal. However, the policy was slightly amended accordingly.

On 4th May 2007, Shih received a medal of “Cultural Critique” from the 48th “Chinese Literature Award”.

Up to June 2006, part of Shih’s published works of 25 books and more than 40 academic papers are This is What I Think, The Ethics of Buddhism, the Sorrowful Guanyin, the Seed Sower of Down-to-Earth Buddhism: Master Shun Yin, Courage to Challenge the Traditions, the Refinement of the Down-to-Earth Buddhism, Today Interpretation of Buddhist Disciplines, the Thought of Wei-Shih in the Early Days, Thousand-year Chants, the New Voice of the Century, the Normative Ethics of Buddhism and the Historical Traces of the Human Bodhisattva.