



## Possible Environmental Crises Facing Singapore & Appropriate Responses: The Case of the Poh Ern Shih Buddhist Temple



The Poh Ern Shih Temple (Temple of Thanksgiving), built in 1954, is an ecologically friendly Buddhist temple located at Chwee Chian Hill, off Pasir Panjang Road, Singapore. In 2000, the Directors decided that the temple had to be redesigned to deal with the rising costs of water, electricity and an over-dependence on fossil fuel. It was noted that environmental degradation had been increasing over the decades and that adopting ecologically friendly technologies was the way to go in the age of rising global temperatures and climate change.

This seminar will focus on Poh Ern Shih Temple's efforts to protect the environment. The temple takes advantage of Singapore's abundant sunlight to produce: (i) Electricity by employing three different kinds of solar energy cells – Polycrystalline, Monocrystalline and Amorphous Cells (ii) Hotwater from Solar Heat Collector Cells in Solar Panels, and (iii) Night Lighting of its landscaping and common corridors with batteries charged by electricity collected from hybrid sets of wind/solar energy units. Meanwhile, Singapore's abundant rainfall has made it possible to (i) Irrigate the temple grounds (ii) Generate electricity via the deployment of Micro Hydrogenerators for charging the batteries of in-house motorized wheelchairs and lighting for its landscaping and common corridors as well as (iii) Conserve, collect and convert the rainwater to drinkable water by deploying Reverse Osmosis Technology in Portable Filtration/UV Units available overseas in the event of natural disasters. Finally, the temple is able to leverage on the abundance of a renewable resource, bamboo, (i) to reduce the culling of our valuable forests by deploying bamboo for all the temple's new furniture wherever possible since it is readily available from neighbouring states and is a 5- year renewable resource as compared to a 100 year old or 300 year old oak or teak tree and (ii) to reduce the pollution from the steel industries, by making all its in-house new wheelchairs from bamboo.

About the seminar



Tuesday, 8 September 2009  
10.00 am to 11.30 am  
ISEAS Seminar Room II

Speaker:  
**Mr Lee Boon Siong**  
**Honorary President and Director**  
**Poh Ern Shih Temple**



Mr. Lee Boon Siong, Honorary President and Director of Poh Ern Shih Temple, was born in Singapore in 1940. He graduated with a Law degree from the University of Singapore in 1963 and practised law in Singapore until 1969 when he emigrated to Canada and obtained a second Law Degree from the University of British Columbia. He practised law in Canada until his retirement in 2005 when he revisited Singapore and was invited to join the Board of Directors of Poh Ern Shih to help in the rebuilding of the then 50-year-old temple.

Observing that the region was very vulnerable to natural disasters due to Climate Change caused by indiscriminate abuse of the environment, he vowed to bring to young Singaporeans the green alternatives readily available and their collective obligation to do everything possible to stop and reduce the abuse.

About the speaker