The Liberal Arts Program presents

Liberal Arts Guest Speaker Series

“Using Archaeology, History and Geology to Study the Occurrence and Impact of Tsunami in the Eastern Indian Ocean: A Case from Aceh, Indonesia”

Dr. Patrick Daly

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LH 143

ABSTRACT INFO:
In 2004 the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated coastal regions in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives, causing massive loss of life and billions of dollars of damage, displacing hundreds of thousands of households, and triggering one of the largest international post-disaster reconstruction efforts in history. The tsunami was unprecedented in recent times and everyone (scientists included) were caught totally off guard. From the early days of the reconstruction, there was a strong emphasis upon safety, enhancing resilience, and improving the living conditions of many within tsunami affected areas. However, the vast majority of reconstructed housing and infrastructure occurred within the 2004 tsunami inundation zone. This talk brings together evidence from a decade of historical and geo-archaeological research conducted by the Earth Observatory of Singapore and the International Center for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies in Aceh, Indonesia to discover the frequency of historic tsunami, and the extent to which they impacted past societies. Landscape survey and excavations provide important evidence demonstrating that the 2004 event was only the most recent in a long history of massive, destructive tsunami that has hit the coast of Aceh. The talk presents the archaeological evidence for a major tsunami that destroyed trading settlements around the north coast of Sumatra at the end of the 14th century AD, possibly re-routing the Indian Ocean and East Asian trading networks for over a century. Additionally, sedimentary and micro-fossil evidence from a coastal cave has revealed a 7,000 year history of tsunami reoccurrence in the eastern Indian Ocean.

BIO:
Patrick Daly is a Principal Investigator at the Earth Observatory of Singapore. He completed a PhD. at the University of Oxford in 2003, and held post-doctoral and research appointments at Cambridge University, and the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. Employing a combination of anthropological and environmental archaeological methods, his research focuses upon human responses to changing environmental conditions, and long-term sequences of human-environmental interactions. Additionally, he has worked extensively in Indonesia, Palestine, and Cambodia on the reconstitution of communities in post-conflict and post-disaster situations. He has spent the past decade conducting research on community level recovery following the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, publishing a number of articles, book chapters, and editing Mapping the Acehnese Past (2011); From the Ground Up: Perspectives on Post-Conflict and Post-tsunami Aceh (2012); and Rebuilding Asia: Approaches to Post-disaster Reconstruction in the Asia/Pacific Region (2015). He is the director of the Aftermath of Aid Project, a large-scale survey of over 70 tsunami affected villages in Aceh, Indonesia. He is currently working on a monograph on post-disaster reconstruction: The Aftermath of Aid: Capacity Building, Development and Sustainability in Post-tsunami Aceh.

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