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Earthquakes in Turkestan at the End of the 19th Century - The Beginning of the 20th Century: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract:

This article presents a number of important analytical data about the history of earthquakes that took place in various regions of Turkestan in the late 19th - early 20th centuries and were preserved in archival documents.

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Earthquakes are one of the natural disasters in human history. Earthquakes have occurred in different regions of the world in the history of mankind. Some of them caused great losses to humanity, while others remained in history as weak earthquakes. Central Asia is a seismically active region. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, several earthquakes occurred in Turkestan. The purpose of this article is to describe the history of these earthquakes.

Today, there are several sources for studying the history of earthquakes in Turkestan. Among them, archival documents, periodical press materials, official reports and scientific expedition materials are of great importance. In particular, there are several funds in the National Archives of Uzbekistan, which describe the history of natural disasters in Central Asia. These sources mainly consist of correspondence and reports of the colonial administration. Periodical press materials gave brief information about the earthquakes that occurred in different parts of Turkestan at that time. Information about earthquakes was also written in official reports to convey to colonial officials. In addition, during this period, several researchers scientifically studied earthquakes.

Periodical press materials described the earthquakes that occurred in Turkestan. In particular, some information was published in "Turkestanskije vedomosti" newspaper. For example, the following information can be found in the information published in this newspaper. An earthquake occurred in the city of Namangan on April 5 and July 22, 1885. The earthquake on April 5 occurred at 9 o'clock in the morning. A strong earthquake was recorded. Because of this, people left their houses and rooms. After leaving, the second and third earthquakes were recorded. As a result, residents were afraid to enter their homes and rooms for a long time. As a result of the earthquake, the ceilings of some houses collapsed and the walls cracked¹.

The July 22 earthquake was not stronger than the April 5 earthquake. However, this earthquake happened at night. That is, this earthquake happened when people were sleeping at 3 o'clock in the morning. As a result, residents were afraid of the earthquake and went out into the streets and yards. This earthquake lasted ten minutes without a break².

During this period, earthquakes occurred not only in the Fergana Valley, but also in the city of Tashkent. For example, on November 16, 1888, at 11:40 in the afternoon, an earthquake occurred in Tashkent. This earthquake occurred almost at the same time as the great earthquake that occurred on November 17, 1886. That is why the population is afraid of this situation. Residents fled outside and waited for the earthquake to end. The earthquake lasted 4 or 5 seconds. However, people did not hurry to enter their homes due to fear. This earthquake was weaker than the 1886 earthquake, and therefore caused less damage. Residents' houses were not damaged. The center of this earthquake was located east of Tashkent city³.

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The next major earthquake in Turkestan occurred in the Fergana Valley. On July 22, 1896, an earthquake occurred in the city of Andijan and the village of Baliqchi, Fergana region. This earthquake occurred 20 minutes past 2 am and lasted 10 minutes. Landslides were recorded during this period. It was mentioned that the number of such tremors reached 30. In addition, various rumbling sounds were heard during this earthquake. This earthquake was also felt in the city of Osh, Fergana region, where it lasted for 8 minutes. People there first heard the rumble of the ground and then the earthquake. Earthquakes continued for 2 minutes and stopped. However, after 10-15 minutes, another earthquake

¹ И.Н. Из Намангана. Туркестанские ведомости. 1885. № 31.

² И.Н. Из Намангана. Туркестанские ведомости. 1885. № 31.

³ Землетрясения в Ташкенте. Правительственный вестник. 1888. № 271.

⁴ Сильное землетрясение в Ташкенте и Маргелане. Правительственный вестник. 1896. № 25, 35.

was observed⁵.

It happened on September 5, 1897 in a large part of Turkistan. This earthquake occurred on the night of September 5 to September 6. At this time, people were sleeping in their houses. As a result of the earthquake, people went out into the streets and were afraid to enter their homes for a long time. This earthquake was also strong in Tashkent. The earthquake started at 7 minutes past 8 o'clock in the evening. The earthquake started with small tremors followed by underground rumbling. As a result of the earthquake, many things in the houses fell to the ground and people went out into the streets. At 10:15 p.m., a second tremor was observed and lasted for 20 seconds. This earthquake was as strong as the first one. In the night from 2 to 6 o'clock there were several weak earthquakes. A similar situation was observed in Ora-tepa. At 45 minutes after 8:00 p.m., a rumbling sound was heard from underground, followed by an earthquake. It lasted 20 seconds. After the night in Tashkent, the earthquakes continued the next morning⁶.

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Official reports also contain information about earthquakes in Turkestan. For example, information about natural disasters is given in statistical collections published in regions. For example, we can learn about the earthquake that occurred in the city of Samarkand on October 8, 1907 from this type of source. This earthquake occurred at 37 minutes after 8:00 a.m. and it formed a point. This earthquake lasted for some time. Earthquakes were observed 15 times during this period. The strongest of them occurred 52 minutes after 8 o'clock and 7 minutes after 9 o'clock, and the intensity of the light was around 8 points. The scores of these 15 earthquakes are listed in archival documents. As a result of this earthquake, several historical buildings in the city were damaged. In addition, the population suffered many casualties.

As a result of this earthquake in the city of Samarkand, several people died. In particular, the head of the city of Samarkand informed the governor general of Turkestan about this. According to his information, Urukbo Sadiqboev, Hanna Hafizova and Zakir Umurbaev who lived in Khabas district of the city died as a result of the earthquake. They died as a result of the ceiling falling on them and hitting their heads against the wall⁸.

In conclusion, it can be said that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, earthquakes occurred from time to time in various regions of Turkestan. Information about these earthquakes has reached us today through various sources. According to these sources, the earthquakes caused fear in the population. Because these earthquakes have caused many losses to people, and in some cases even human deaths

⁵ Землетрясения в Семиреченской и Ферганской областях. Правительственный вестник. 1896. № 166, 167, 180, 186, 195.

⁶ Леопов Б. Землетрясения в Туркестанском крае 5-го сентября 1897 года. Туркестанский сборник. // Том 473, с. 61-62.

⁷ Землетрясения в Семиреческой области. // Правительственный вестник. 1888. № 5, 15, 74, 78.

⁸ ЎзМА, фонд-И-18, рўйхат-1, йиғмажилд-2224, в. 10

have occurred. On the other hand, during this period, several scientific studies were conducted to prevent earthquakes.

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