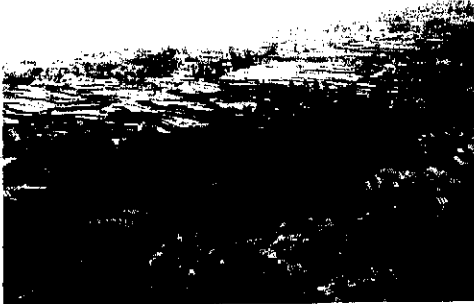


Community Monitoring and Early Warning Success for Huge Landslide

in Yanmen Village, Dazhou City, Sichuan Province on July 7, 2007



Before the Landslide



After the Landslide

Disaster Scene



Comments:

The sound and thorough effort by the Yanmen Village community to couple popular disaster education with geo-hazard monitoring by its local residents brought about the timely forecasting of the landslide hazard and the full cooperation of the community residents with local government officials to evacuate quickly.

At 6 o'clock on July 7, 2007, a huge landslide hit Yanmen Village in Qingning Town, Da County, Sichuan Province. Triggered by continuous rainstorms for several days, the landslide destroyed thousands of houses and large tracts of terraced farmland in seconds. In less than an hour, Yanmen Village in East Sichuan, populated by 2251 residents of 552 families, totally vanished. Fortunately, this terrible event did not cause any casualties, thanks to the timely forecasting by local residents and their rapid and orderly evacuation. All the residents of Yanmen Village had relocated safely before the disastrous landslide occurred. This community-managed early warning success is one of many showing the power and effectiveness of coupling popular disaster education with geo-hazard monitoring by local residents.

The timely evacuation of residents from Yanmen Village is attributed to Xie Guangquan, a villager monitoring person who had been trained during China's "National Campaign to Popularize Geo-hazard Knowledge in 10,000 Villages". From July 2 – 6, 2007, heavy rains had soaked Da County. During one of Xie's monitoring rounds, he found a crack that was quickly widening on the ground in the 3rd Group of homes of Yanmen Village. He immediately reported this development to Zeng Fanchang, Director of the Village Committee, and began repeatedly striking a bronze alarm while racing to alert the village families one after another to run to safety quickly! Director Zeng, after receiving villager Xie's report, immediately transmitted the report to Wu Gang, Secretary of the Party Committee in Qingning Town. The town government immediately launched its emergency plan and Secretary Wu rushed with his staff to the developing landslide scene.

The town officials quickly organized themselves into six teams to help the villagers in the hazardous area evacuate as fast as possible. At about 6 o'clock on July 7th, no sooner after all the residents had evacuated their village, the huge landslide occurred, entirely destroying the village with a deafening roar. In just an hour, thousands of houses in Yanmen Village were turned into ruins as they tumbled into the valley. The body of the landslide broke down and collapsed in 3 steps. The entire landslide was greater than 2 km in length and more than 1.5 km in width, with a total volume about 33 million cubic meters. This landslide destroyed 1658 houses, 11 pools, 7 km of roadway and aqueduct of 12,300 meters in length. There was also major crop damage over a large area. The direct economic loss is assessed at 150.3 million yuan. Experts believe that the continuous large rainstorms caused this disastrous landslide. It was indeed a miracle that no one was injured or killed by this devastating event, despite the total destruction of thousands of houses.

NEWS LINK

The "National Campaign to Popularize Geo-hazard Knowledge in 10,000 Villages" aims to have the public at large learn and master the basic knowledge on geo-hazards. 'Though I can read and write only a little, I attended the geohazard education session and was surprised to learn that geo-hazards are lying around us. I became a village geo-hazard monitoring volunteer, and was able to quickly recognize the appearance of a fissure as a warning sign for an imminent landslide (Xie Guangquan, a farmer in Yanmen Village of Da County in Sichuan Province).'

【Background Information】

During December 2006 to February 2007, the Municipal Government of Da County extended the national campaign to popularize geo-hazard knowledge down to those towns, villages and communes frequented by geo-hazard events. Through the 'face-to-face' training method, technicians or experts taught the local government officials and village volunteer monitors basic knowledge on geo-hazard monitoring and prevention. These trainings were then echoed down to the grassroots. In this way, 420,000 people in Da County were trained during this national campaign, 21,000 people were consulted and 84,000 sheets of popularization material were distribute. Moreover, the Bureau of Land and Resources of the Da County Government broadcasted the 372 potential geo-hazardous spots on local TV, which widened and deepened the popularization activity.



■ Officials of China's Ministry of Land and Resources at the disaster scene