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3D remote-sensing study of the spatial distribution of landslides in SE Weihe Basin, central China

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Many factors may be responsible for the occurrence of landslides, such as moderate to large magnitude earthquakes, typhoons as well as human activity. The landslides triggered by the earthquake are mostly concentrated in and around the epicentral area of large earthquakes over a distance of tens of kilometers, as well their distribution is strongly affected by the seismic faulting (e.g. Ren and Lin, 2010). To learn the distribution of landslides and its controlling factors is vital to make the risk assessments of landslide hazard, especially within the seismic active region.

Remote-sensing techniques have been applied to learn the spatial distribution of co-seismic landslides, based on cross-check of the refection features of images acquired before and after the earthquake. Meanwhile, Digital Elevation Model (DEM) data with world-wide coverage (e.g. 90-m SRTM data) were also used to learn the topographic features of locations where landslides occurred (e.g. Ren and Lin, 2010). However, most of by previous studies are limited to analyze in map-view. Here we present a case study of the distribution of landslides and its relation to the active normal faults in SE Weihe Basin, central China, by using the 3D remote-sensing techniques which has been previously applied to detect the locations of seismic faults associated with moderate to large magnitude earthquakes.

In this study, higher resolution remote-sensing images (1-m IKONOS and 0.5-m WorldView data) were processed and analyzed in 3D perspective views by draping them on the 30-m ASTER Global Digital Elevation Model (ASTER GDEM) data. High-resolution Google Earth images if available were also used to cross-check the spatial distribution of landslides. Based on the results of our analysis, we then conducted the fieldwork to validate the interpretations of the remote-sensing images.

The results of our analysis indicate that the landslides are mostly distribution in the regions between the Weinan and Huayin city, which was inferred as the epicentral area of 1556 M8.5 Huaxian earthquake. Meanwhile, the landslides (including the largest Lianhuashi and Zhangling landslides) are generally developed upon the steep slopes (30^o-65^o) within a narrow zone with width of ˜8-11 km and ˜3 km along the Huashan Piedmont Fault and Northern Margin Fault of the Weinan Loess Tableland, respectively. The distribution of landslides was affected by the active faults and slope morphology in study area. The devastating 1556 M8.5 Huaxian earthquake caused widespread damages in the densely-populated region around the Xi'an city, an old capital of China, resulting in more than 830,000 deaths (largest total ever claimed), including the people killed by the giant landslides (e.g. Zhangling landslide). 3D remote-sensing techniques show their advantages to precisely constrain the spatial distribution of landslides and thus make the risk assessment of landslide hazard in the seismically active regions, such as the SE Weihe Basin.

References cited:

Ren, Z. & Lin, A. 2010. Co-seismic landslides induced by the 2008 Wenchuan magnitude 8.0 Earthquake, as revealed by ALOS PRISM and AVNIR2 imagery data. *Intern'l J. Remote Sensing* **31**, 3479-3493.

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