

Chinese Earthquakes Since 1900 with 1,000 or More Deaths

Jul 30 1917	Yunnan	Deaths: 1,800	Mag: 7.5	
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Many houses collapsed in the Hengjiang and Daguan River Valleys. An iron chain bridge at Yanjin was turned upside down and several stone bridges collapsed. Rockslides blocked the Daguan River, causing the water to flow back upstream for several kilometers.

Feb 13 1918	City: Nan'ao	Deaths: 1,000	Mag: 7.4	
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Most houses destroyed and 80% of the population was killed or wounded on Nan'ao. About 1,000 people killed or injured at Shantou (Swatow). More than 90% of houses destroyed or damaged in the Jieyang-Yunxiao area of Guangdong and Fujian Provinces. Damage occurred as far away as Fuzhou (Foochow). The death toll may be as high as 10,000, but is difficult to count since the source combines deaths and injuries and often gives percentages instead of specific numbers. The quake was felt in Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Taiwan and Zhejiang Provinces.

Dec 16 1920	City: Haiyuan	Deaths: 200,000	Mag: 7.8	Seiches
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Total destruction (XII - the maximum intensity on the Mercalli scale) in the Lijunbu-Haiyuan-Ganyanchi area. Over 73,000 people were killed in Haiyuan County. A landslide buried the village of Sujiahe in Xiji County. More than 30,000 people were killed in Guyuan County. Nearly all the houses collapsed in the cities of Longde and Huining. Damage (VI-X) occurred in 7 provinces and regions, including the major cities of Lanzhou, Taiyuan, Xi'an, Xining and Yinchuan. It was felt from the Yellow Sea to Qinghai (Tsinghai) Province and from Nei Mongol (Inner Mongolia) south to central Sichuan (Szechwan) Province. About 200 km (125 mi) of surface faulting was seen from Lijunbu through Ganyanchi to Jingtai. There were large numbers of landslides and ground cracks throughout the epicentral area. Some rivers were dammed, others changed course. Seiches from this earthquake were observed in 2 lakes and 3 fjords in western Norway. Although usually called the Kansu (now Gansu) earthquake by Western sources, the epicenter and highest intensities are clearly within Ningxia Autonomous Region.

Mar 24 1923	Sichuan	Deaths: 3,500	Mag: 7.3	Landslides
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Severe damage and landslides in the Luhuo-Dawu area. Some damage and casualties occurred at Qianning.

Mar 16 1925	Dali, Yunnan	Deaths: 5,800	Mag: 7.0	
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More than 76,000 houses collapsed or burned in the Dali area, where over 3,600 people were killed and 7,200 injured. (There is a slight possibility that these are the total figures for the earthquake, not just Dali). Damage and casualties also occurred in Fengyi, Midu, Binchuan and Dengchuan Counties. It was felt at Kunming.

May 22 1927	Gulang, Ganssu	Deaths: 40,900	Mag: 7.6	Landslides
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Extreme damage in the Gulang-Wuweï area. Landslides buried a town near Gulang and dammed a stream in Wuwei County, creating a new lake. Large fissures and sandblows occurred in the area. Damage occurred from Lanzhou through Minqin and Yongchang to Jinta. It was felt at Xi'an and as far as 700 km (440 mi) from the epicenter. This area along the base of the Qilian Shan (formerly named Nan Shan, which is why this is sometimes called the Nan Shan earthquake) was part of the Silk Road connecting China with Central Asia. Some sources list the death toll as high as 200,000, but this may be a confusion with the much-bigger Ningxia quake of 1920. Also, Gu et al. report that over 250,000 livestock were killed by this earthquake.

Aug 10 1931	Fuyun, Xinjiang	Deaths: 10,000	Mag: 8.0	Landslides
Severe damage, ground fissures, landslides, sandblows and subsidence in the Fuyun-Qinghe area. Some mines caved in at Altay. Slight damage occurred at Urumqi.				
Dec 25 1932	Changma, Gansu	Deaths: 275	Mag: 7.6	Landslides
Authoritative Chinese sources list the death toll as 275, which seems to be consistent with the damage reports. Over 1,100 houses collapsed in the Changma area. Damage occurred from Dunhuang to Gaotai. Surface rupture or deformation observed from Changma east intermittently for more than 110 km (65 mi). There were landslides, ground fissures and sandblows in the area. Also felt in parts of Qinghai (Tsinghai) and Xinjiang (Sinkiang). One source lists the death toll as 70,000, but this does not seem to be confirmed by the damage descriptions nor by other sources.				
Aug 25 1933	Sichuan	Deaths: 9,300	Mag: 7.5	Landslides/Lakes
The city of Diexi and about 60 villages in the area were completely destroyed. Damage and casualties also occurred at Chengdu. Felt at Chongqing and Xi'an. Landslides created 4 lakes on the Min Jiang River. Over 2,500 of the casualties occurred 45 days after the earthquake, when the lakes broke through the slides and inundated the valley.				
Mar 7 1966	Hebei	Deaths: 1,000	Mag: 7.0	
More than 135,000 houses collapsed and 190,000 were severely damaged in Hebei Province. The worst damage was in Julu County, where over 106,000 houses collapsed and another 100,000 were heavily damaged. Some houses collapsed in Shanxi (Shansi) Province. It was felt throughout Hebei and Shanxi Provinces and in most of Henan (Honan) and Shandong (Shantung) Provinces. Ground fissures and sandblows occurred along the banks of the Fuyang River. Except for reports that 4,166 families "suffered disaster" in Longyao County and that great numbers of medical personnel had been rushed to Xingtai (Singtai) to care for the victims, no casualty figures were released for this earthquake. Based on the amount of damage and time of day it occurred, we assume that it killed at least 1,000 people, and very likely many more than that.				
Mar 22 1966	Hebei	Deaths: 1,000	Mag: 6.9	
More than 180,000 "rooms" collapsed and 276,000 were severely damaged in Hebei Province, with the most severe damage in the Ningjin-Shinhe area. At least 10,000 rooms collapsed and over 22,000 were heavily damaged in Shandong (Shantung) Province. Over 6,000 rooms and cave dwellings collapsed in Shanxi (Shansi) Province and some rooms collapsed in the Anyang area of Henan (Honan) Province. Some damage occurred at Beijing (Peking) and Tianjin (Tientsin). It was felt as far away as Hohhot and Nanjing. In the epicentral area, large fissures crisscrossed the ground and there were many sandblows. Embankments slumped into the Fuyang River. As with the Mar 07 quake, no casualty figures were released, other than to say fewer people died than in the previous event. We assume that at least 1,000 people were killed in this earthquake based on the severe and extensive damage, despite the fact that it occurred in the afternoon, when most people would have been awake and better able to protect themselves.				
Jul 25 1969	Yangjiang	Deaths: 3,000	Mag: 5.9	
More than 10,700 houses collapsed and about 36,000 were severely damaged in Yangjiang County. Some damage also occurred in the Xinyi-Yunan area, Guangdong (Kwangtung) and in the Teng Xian-Rong Xian area, Guangxi (Kwangsi). Slight damage occurred in Hong Kong. Fissures, landslides and sandblows were observed along the coast and along some rivers in the area. The death toll is estimated from unconfirmed reports. However, this seems reasonable based on the number of houses collapsed in this generally non-seismic area and the time of day it occurred (6:49 AM, local time).				

Jan 4 1970	City: Tonghai	Deaths: 10,000	Mag: 7.5
<p>The earthquake was centered 75 miles southwest of Kunming, a city of almost one million population, and 60 miles northwest of Gejiu (Kokiu), which has 180,000 people. Residents in Hanoi, North Vietnam, about 300 miles from the epicenter, fled from their homes in terror as the temblor rumbled through that city. That severe damage occurred in the Tonghai area may be inferred from the approximate number of casualties, which was announced in 1988. It caused about 50 km (about 30 mi) of surface faulting on the Tonghai Fault, with maximum horizontal offset of 2.5 m (8 ft) and vertical offset of about 0.5 m (1.5 ft).</p>			
May 10 1974	City: Dagan	Deaths: 1,423	Mag: 7.1
<p>A 7.1-magnitude earthquake rocked Dagan, southwest China's Yunnan Province. The quake was strongly felt in Yunnan's neighboring province Sichuan. The calamity killed 1,423 people, injured 1,600 others, and damaged 66,000 houses, of which 28,000 were completely destroyed.</p>			
Feb 4 1975	City: Haicheng	Deaths: 2,000	Mag: 7.0
<p>The earthquake caused many fatalities and injuries, and extensive damage in the Yingkou-Haicheng areas. Minor damage was reported in Seoul, South Korea. The quake was felt in Primorskiy Kray, USSR, and on Kyushu, Japan. Chinese officials ordered the evacuation of Haicheng (population about 1 million) the day before the earthquake. In the preceding months, changes in land elevation and in ground water levels, and widespread reports of peculiar animal behavior had been reported. The increase in foreshock activity triggered the evacuation warning. It was estimated that the number of fatalities and injuries would have exceeded 150,000 if no earthquake prediction and evacuation had been made. The evacuation, along with the local style of housing construction and the time of the main shock, 7:36 p.m., saved thousands of lives.</p>			
Jul 27 1970	City: Tangshan	Deaths: 255,000	Mag: 7.5
<p>Official casualty figure is 255,000 deaths. Estimated death toll as high as 655,000. 799,000 injured and extensive damage in the Tang-Shan area. Damage extended as far as Beijing. This is probably the greatest death toll from an earthquake in the last four centuries, and the second greatest in recorded history.</p>			
May 12 2008	City: Sichuan	Deaths: 87,587	Mag: 7.9 Landslides
<p>At least 69,195 people killed, 374,177 injured and 18,392 missing and presumed dead in the Chengdu-Lixian-Guangyuan area. More than 45.5 million people in 10 provinces and regions were affected. At least 15 million people were evacuated from their homes and more than 5 million were left homeless. An estimated 5.36 million buildings collapsed and more than 21 million buildings were damaged in Sichuan and in parts of Chongqing, Gansu, Hubei, Shaanxi and Yunnan. The total economic loss was estimated at 86 billion US dollars. Beichuan, Dujiangyan, Wuolong and Yingxiu were almost completely destroyed. Landslides and rockfalls damaged or destroyed several mountain roads and railways and buried buildings in the Beichuan-Wenchuan area, cutting off access to the region for several days. At least 700 people were buried by a landslide at Qingchuan. Landslides also dammed several rivers, creating 34 barrier lakes which threatened about 700,000 people downstream. A train was buried by a landslide near Longnan, Gansu. At least 2,473 dams sustained some damage and more than 53,000 km of roads and 48,000 km of tap water pipelines were damaged. About 1.5 km of surface faulting was observed near Qingchuan, surface cracks and fractures occurred on three mountains in the area, and subsidence and street cracks were observed in the city itself. Maximum intensity XI was assigned in the Wenchuan area. Felt (VIII) at Deyang and Mianyang; (VII) at Chengdu; (VI) at Luzhou and Xi'an; (V) at Chongqing, Guozhen, Lanzhou, Leshan, Wu'an, Xichang and Ya'an. Felt in much of central, eastern and southern China, including Beijing, Guangzhou, Hefei, Nanjing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Wuhan and in Hong Kong. Also felt in parts of Bangladesh, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Seiches were observed at Kotalipara, Bangladesh.</p>			