

tion is as follows: 'But suddenly the sky became red on all sides, like the fierce fire that will appear at the end of the world; it prognosticated destruction by famine. The world showed symptoms of a calamity and trembled, as if unable to bear the weight of a famine.'

The famine is further described in detail. However the trembling of the earth mentioned may not be just figurative.

Conclusion

Search of historical literature and records gives valuable information regarding regional seismicity and may even help scientists in refining recurrence intervals of seismic activity. There are innumerable references and speculations about earthquakes in ancient and medieval Indian writings. But information on the dates and location of actual

shocks is not available. Thus, the description, provided by the historians of Kashmir, of the shock of 1554 A.D. is perhaps unique.

The Cambridge history of India in the chapter 'Kingdom of Kashmir' mentions a great earthquake which changed the course of river Jhelum. This is perhaps the same as the one described previously. Also this may be same as the 1552 A.D. Srinagar event listed in the earthquake catalogues. The description of the shaking: 'It caused holes in the ground and the land was agitated like a gourd on the waves The earthquake continued for several days, occurring several times every day.' indicates severe shaking with a main event of MMI intensity IX-X and Richter's magnitude reaching 7 or higher values. Cross references from other literary sources may throw more light on the felt area of the earthquake. All the places

mentioned in the text are identifiable. For example Varahakshetra or Varahmula, is the present day Baramulla. Hence palaeoseismic studies in the Kashmir valley will also prove to be valuable.

1. 'Catalogue of earthquake in Armenia' in *The Armenia Earthquake of December 1988* (eds Yegian, M. K. and Ghahraman, V. G.), N. E. University, Boston, USA, 1992.
2. Athavale, R. N., *Curr. Sci.*, 1995, 69, 279-280.
3. Dutt, J. C., *Kings of Kashmira*, Mittal Publishers, New Delhi, India, 1887 (reprinted 1990), vols I-III.

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Erratum

Metallization of hydrogen – Everest conquered?

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S. Ramaseshan

Read '140 GPa' instead of '140 megabars' in 1 column, 8th line on page 877.