

Taipei 101 may be causing earthquakes

2 December 2005

Experts disagree on whether Taipei 101, the world's tallest building in Taipei, Taiwan, might be the cause of earthquakes.

At 700,000 tons, Taipei 101, also known as the Taipei Financial Center, may also be among the heaviest buildings in the world. Geologist Cheng Horng Lin of the National Taiwan Normal University says the stress from the skyscraper may have reopened an ancient earthquake fault, the Guardian reported Friday.

Before the skyscraper was built, the Taipei basin was a very stable area with no active earthquake faults at the surface with micro-earthquakes -- less than magnitude 2 occurring each year, says Lin.

"Since the construction finished there have been two larger earthquakes -- magnitude 3.8 and 3.2 -- directly beneath Taipei 101, which were big enough to feel," says Lin.

However, John Vidale, an earthquake expert at the University of California in Los Angeles says a building will change the stress on the ground under the building, but this probably not reach the level where earthquakes occur.

The findings are published in the Geophysical Research Letters.

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