

On stress drops in the sources of moderate and weak earthquakes: features of distribution in time

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Abstract. An analysis has been performed of the change in stress drops over time during the period of foreshock activity of strong earthquakes for two seismically active regions with different geodynamic settings: the Northern Tien Shan and the Southern Kuril Islands. The catalogs of earthquake dynamic parameters, DP (source ones in English publications), in these regions, with a number of events, were used as initial data. The DP catalog for the Northern Tien Shan includes 183 records of source parameters of earthquakes with magnitudes of 2.6–6.0, and the catalog for the Southern Kurils – 264 records. The stress drop values throughout a general sampling were analyzed as well as that in foreshock periods of 500 days length before the strongest earthquakes. For each region 12 such meaningful events have been specified, the magnitudes were $M > 5$ for the Northern Tien Shan, and $M \geq 6.5$ for the Southern Kurils. The median average values of stress drops during 500-day period have been determined. The temporal variations of stress drops have been compared with changes in the b -value parameter (angular coefficient of earthquake recurrence plot) in the same observation periods. The computation of b -value for the case of the Northern Tien Shan involved the catalog data of KNET seismological network (1994–2021, more than 10 000 events), and the catalog of International Seismological Center (ISC, 1964–2000) for the Southern Kurils. In both cases, b -values were determined in 500-day moving interval with one day step. The computation gave the result that the well-known effect of b -value growth before strong earthquakes manifested itself explicitly in the considered regions. It has been established that such increase in b -value is accompanied by a decrease in the averaged stress drop values. The obtained results showed that the monitoring of the stress drop values can be used to identify the non stationary stage of the seismic regime.

Keywords:

earthquake, seismicity, foreshocks period, stress drops, b -value,

Northern Tien Shan, Southern Kuril Islands

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