

Unzen Volcano : the 1900-1992 eruption

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Preface

Since the Mt. Fugen of Unzen Volcano suddenly burst into eruption on 17 November 1990, after 198 years of quiescence, one year and half have passed already. The volcano is, however, still very active, constantly growing lava domes and giving rise to frequent pyroclastic flows.

This renewed activity of Unzen volcano not only claimed the lives of 43 people, among whom three able volcanologists are included, but also has made havoc of wealthy land and peaceful life in the Shimabara area, West Kyushu.

Soon after this catastrophic eruption, Mount Pinatubo in Luzon Island, Philippines, which is claimed to be related to the westward subduction of the Philippine Sea Plate beneath the Eurasia Plate as is Unzen Volcano, made also climactic explosions in June 1991.

Such unexpected events have encouraged us to urgently collect as much scientific information of the Unzen eruption as possible in order to support effective geohazard assessment and mitigation of devastating volcanic disasters.

For this purpose, many important reports and documents including original data, which cover various aspects of the Unzen eruption, have been contributed, surprisingly rapidly, mainly by specialists from various disciplines of Kyushu University. Therefore, this book is most vivid and informative in many respects.

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