

Unzen Volcano : the 1900-1992 eruption

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<http://hdl.handle.net/2324/9836>

出版情報 : 1992. The Nishinippon Co., Ltd.

バージョン :

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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.

The editors wish to thank the contributors for their efforts to prepare papers on time.

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank the following for their support, help and encouragement throughout the observation of the Unzen Volcano and the completion of this Publication. Messrs. K. Yamashita, Y. Takahashi, T. Tsuruta, H. Majima, H. Ito, T. Yanagida, F. Muto, J. Oda, Y. Tanida, Ms. N. Sato assisted us in collecting and analyzing samples. Geophysical,

geological and geochemical observations of the Unzen Volcano have been done in cooperation with many specialists from all over Japan, and financially supported by Kyushu University and Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Japan. Especially Drs. K. Kamo, T. Fujii, T. Kobayashi, T. Ui, H. Aramaki, and T. Nishiyama helped and encouraged us all through the observation. Dr. D. Shimozuru, the head of the Coordinating Committee for the Prediction of Volcanic Eruption, encouraged one of us to publish this book. The Ground Self-Defense Force constantly provided us with helicopters for geological survey of lava domes and pyroclastic flows from the air and also assisted us in monitoring and the maintenance of seismographs and other facilities. Nagasaki Prefectural Government also assisted us in survey from the air. Nagasaki Prefectural Government, Shimabara Police Office, Unzen National Park Office, Unzen Park Visiter Center, Nagasaki Local Forestry Office, Shimabara High School, TOPCON Corporation, Shimabara Kanko Hotel offered convenience to us during the survey.

We are very grateful to the United Nation's Center for Regional Development, Nagoya, Japan, who has kindly given us permission for publication of Prof. Nagamatsu's paper which is originally a report to the above organization. Mr. H. Katayama, the head priest of Honkoji Buddhist Temple, and Shimabara City Library gave us the permission to publish old maps in this book. The Asia Air Survey Co., Ltd. allowed us to publish some photographs in this book. Ms. K. Miller, Ms. R. Hamamoto, Ms. E. Abe and Mr. Panagopoulos asisted us in proofreading and editing of this book.

This book could not be published without the support of Nishinippon Shinbun.

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