

Unzen Volcano : the 1900-1992 eruption

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Eastern view of Unzen Volcano in the Shimabara Peninsula, Kyushu, SW Japan. New lava domes with the thick apron of volcanic debris have formed near the summit of Mt. Fugen (1,359 m) since 20 May 1991. Rockfalls from the fronts of domes descended as pyroclastic flows along the Mizunashi River (straight toward readers) and Oshigadani Valley (curved in the clockwise direction). In the Kita-Kamikoba area, Shimabara City, where the Oshigadani Valley joins with the Mizunashi River, forty-three people were killed by ash cloud surge of the 3 June 1991 pyroclastic flow. Mt. Mayuyama with a natural amphitheater facing to the sea (right) collapsed in the event of the 1792 eruption, and about 15,000 people were killed. Shimabara City (right) and Fukae Town (left) are separated by the Mizunashi River. A moderate earthquake swarm occurred near the center of the Chijiwa Bay (top) in November 1989. This swarm was followed by the activation in seismicity beneath the western flank of the volcano. The hypocenters got shallower and moved toward Mt. Fugen with time. (20 January 1992, by courtesy of Asia Air Survey Co., Ltd.). (S. Nakada)