

Geological examination of the surface ruptures recorded in the old documents for the "Shimabara Catastrophe" occurred in 1792

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On 21 May 1792, an earthquake triggered collapse of the Mt. Mayuyama (or Maeyama), a lava dome on Unzen volcano, Japan. The debris avalanche and resulting tsunami caused about 15000 deaths. This great disaster was called "Shimabara Catastrophe". According to the old documents concerning the "Shimabara Catastrophe", many surface ruptures occurred during this event. It has been considered that those ruptures were due to landslides. From our geological examination of the ancient records, however, we can say with fair certainty that some ruptures were the result of normal faulting accompanying the earthquake.