Lightning crackles over Japan on Friday as ash and lava erupt from Shinmoedake peak, one of the calderas of the Kirishima volcano complex.

Shinmoedake began erupting Wednesday, coating nearby villages and farms with ash and prompting authorities to ask for voluntary evacuations within a 1.2-mile (2-kilometer) radius.
Volcanic lightning is still a mystery, though it may be that electrically charged silica—part of magma—interacts with the atmosphere when it flies out of a volcano, Steve McNutt of the Alaska Volcano Observatory told National Geographic News in February 2010.

(Also see pictures of volcanic lightning during a recent eruption of an Iceland volcano.)

Comments

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1 wiebke
Score: 0
4:46 AM on February 4, 2011
love the colors

2 twilightmood
Score: 1
11:26 AM on February 1, 2011
Holy cow that's cool

3 juliettestevens
Score: 7
7:49 AM on February 1, 2011
gorgeous and terrible at the same time... wow

4 maxfrommke
Score: 17
12:31 PM on January 31, 2011
Expect that picture to appear as the next album cover for every power metal band on earth this year. If you look closely, you can see the ghost of Ronnie James Dio in the smoke!

5 myra_linara
Score: 1
2:54 AM on January 31, 2011
It's both scary and mesmerizing! Nature's own fireworks.

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