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## Pictures: Volcano Lightning Electrifies Japan Eruption



Photograph by Minami-Nippon Shibun/Reuters

**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.)

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4:46 AM on February 4, 2011  
love the colors

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

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**juliettstevens**  
7:49 AM on February 1, 2011  
gorgeous and terrible at the same time... wow

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**maxfrommke**  
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!

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**myra\_linara**  
2:54 AM on January 31, 2011  
It's both scary and mesmerizing! Nature's own fireworks.

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