

# Japan Geoscience Union Meeting 2011

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SVC052-03

Room:302

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## Hisashi Kuno - Triumph of the Spirit

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As a young American boy living in Japan from 1955-1960, I was well aware of Japan's path toward recovery from the devastation of the Pacific War. Whole sections of Yokohama, where I lived, remained in impoverished condition, and many parts of the city were still being rebuilt. In the late 1960s, while first studying petrology, I became aware of the work of Hisashi Kuno, and of his role in the United States as an ambassador for Japanese science and especially petrology. Following the war, Kuno was one of the first Japanese scientists to travel to the United States, where he worked on pyroxenes with Harry Hess at Princeton University. His paper about Hakone volcano, and later papers about pyroxenes, rock series, magmatic differentiation and parental magmas in Japan and elsewhere became standard fare for American petrologists wishing to understand island arcs and igneous petrogenesis. Reading about his life, I discovered how seriously the war years delayed his scientific work, and came to appreciate the obstacles he overcame in order, finally, to finish his dissertation in 1948, 17 years after he began, and while Japan itself was still in very dire straits. Then he went on to an exemplary career - helping to carry Japanese science to a level of international awareness and acceptance it had never had before. His secrets seemed to be great perseverance, assiduous attention both to detail and to all aspects of a particular problem ? especially pyroxenes, diligence and great skill with the microscope, publication in English and a level of serene authority that worked well with students and colleagues. He obtained mastery in his craft during a period of great adversity, in a way that is to me particularly Japanese in mind and spirit.

Keywords: history of geology, igneous petrology, island arcs, pyroxenes, differentiation