

理学部見聞録

What brought you to RIGAKUBU?

第3回

Jerome Pitogo de Leon

(天文学専攻博士課程2年生)

Photographer by day, Astronomer by night

UTokyo School of Science (SoS) is a prestigious institution home to world-renowned scientists and academicians. Hence studying at SoS will provide a cutting-edge research and mentorship opportunities not readily available elsewhere.

Before coming to Japan, I previously did research in Taiwan mainly under a Japanese researcher. This gave me a first-hand experience of the Japanese work ethic that taught me how to become result-oriented, with emphasis on laser-focused work. That is why it was relatively easy for me to adapt to this working environment after I entered SoS graduate school. At SoS, I have the advantage to work with my adviser, Dr. Motohide Tamura, and several other mentors who are experts in the field. Moreover, SoS provides generous funding and academic support for its students.

Being an aspiring astronomer, a significant part of my work is conducting astronomical observations in remote sites such as on top of mountains in Hawaii where the Subaru telescope is situated. Access and use of this state-of-the-art facility are very limited

but thanks to SoS resources and collaboration, I can take advantage of this privilege to be able to produce cutting-edge research.

When I am not traveling to attend a conference or conduct astronomical observation in Japan or abroad, I stay in my office in the Hongo campus. Here I have everything—computing resources, large collections of resources in the library, seasoned and permanent collaborators, and even coffee—that I need to do research. Everything is already taken care of which makes SoS a very conducive place for learning. When I get stressed out, the campus offers nature, the beautiful Sanshiro pond for example, to relax and bring peace to mind.

I work in the office on a daily basis. But as an aspiring astronomer, I travel to various observatories in different countries every now and then. For our project alone, I was able to travel to the US, South Africa, and Spain. Attending conferences is also exciting because I got to visit a NASA facility in the US.

profile

- 2018– PhD student in Astronomy, I love to observe the night sky and analyze the bulk of imaging and time series data to discover and characterize exoplanet atmospheres.
- 2016–2018 M.Sc. Astronomy, UTokyo
- 2015–2016 Japanese language and research student, Sokendai & NAOJ
- 2014–2014 Intern, Academia Sinica Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics, Taiwan
- 2013–2014 Research Assistant, Regulus SpaceTech Inc., Philippines
- 2009–2013 B.Sc. in Applied Physics, U. of the Philippines



The author during an observation run using Subaru telescope in Hawaii

On a personal note, I am very grateful that I was able to see the world not from the perspective of a tourist but of a scientist. In this way, I see the world as a laboratory to do great science. In the process, I get to taste various kinds of food, learn to speak some words of a different language, experience a bit of culture, and altogether learn new things that are not found inside the classroom.



(Left) An instrument developed by our team attached to the back of telescope in Okayama.



(Right) I and my co-adviser, Dr. Akihiko Fukui, in the Teide Observatory in Canary Island, Spain during another observation run.