

TSUKUBA ALUMNI

CEO, Earth Science Visualization Technology Laboratory

SHIBAHARA Akihiko

Advantages of Studying at the University of Tsukuba in My Career and Life

During my student years, I engaged in fossil research, a pursuit that continued at the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST). I am currently developing and marketing a system that vividly presents fossils and excavation site data by projecting this information onto a detailed 3D map. Considering that the technology was obtained during a research at the University of Tsukuba, it was approved as a venture by the University, in addition to AIST.

Moreover, I am spearheading a groundbreaking program that enables users to virtually experience fossil excavations in the metaverse. The closure of museums and similar facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the unique value of this program, offering an experience that surpasses traditional museum offerings. With appropriate data, we can even visualize extraterrestrial landscapes.

The University of Tsukuba's flexible curriculum allowed me to take classes across various disciplines, not limited to my major. This enabled me to attend mechanical engineering classes, a field I have always been passionate about, alongside my earth science studies. Similarly, students from information processing would often attend practical fossil science courses. This diverse academic background now empowers me to seamlessly integrate fossils with technology.

My Fondest Memories as a Student

One of the highlights of my student life was



Revolutionizing Visualization: A Novel Fusion of Fossils and Technology

participating in a fieldwork class known as the "Grand Tour." This journey took us from Shimane Prefecture to Fukui Prefecture, traversing aquatic and terrestrial routes. We observed renowned geological formations, gaining a profound appreciation for the vast scales of time and space that earth science explores, far exceeding those encountered in daily life. My adventurous spirit flourished during my graduate studies when I conducted research in the Arctic Ocean, using the University as my base camp.

I also fondly recall participating in a Science Fiction Association. This group engaged in more than just reading together; we partook in unique activities, such as an impromptu visit to the Great Buddha of Ushiku, *Ushiku Daibutsu*. There, we compared the Daibutsu's size with that of giant robots in sci-fi, providing a novel perspective on scale.

Another cherished memory is the creation of special effects films in my apartment. Initially using simple finger puppets, I gradually progressed to crafting various miniature figures using machine tools. These

creative endeavors laid the foundation for my current professional pursuits.

Message to Students of the University of Tsukuba

One of the most appealing aspects of the University of Tsukuba is its provision for students to explore a wide range of information across various faculties. Such opportunities are rare and invaluable. We warmly invite those considering applying to the University to join us and immerse yourselves in this enriching experience.

PROFILE SHIBAHARA Akihiko

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Completed Doctoral Program in Biological Sciences in 2007 from the Graduate School of Life and Environmental Sciences
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