

Michinari Sakai

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Summary

- Expertise in GEANT4 particle transport simulations with 8 years of experience.
- Experience with nuclear decay radiation, photon propagation in 3 major particle physics experiments.
- Innovative problem solving skills with the ability to interface original work with larger collaboration.

Experience

Post-doctoral Researcher, UC Berkeley June 2018 — *Present*

- Supervisor for GEANT4 modeling of photon interactions with wavelength shifters and detector materials.
- Lead researcher for characterization of micro-physical optical properties of wavelength shifter thin films.

Post-doctoral Researcher, UCLA 2016 — 2018

- Mentor for 2 PhD students to simulate radiation shielding structures in GEANT4 to mitigate γ/β backgrounds for next generation $0\nu\beta\beta$ searches requiring ultra-low backgrounds.
- Lead developer of precision α decay spectrum model to improve characterization of backgrounds in $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay searches.

Research Assistant, University of Hawaii at Manoa 2009 — 2016

- Lead developer of GEANT4 detector simulation to conducted case studies of neutron capture doping agents in solid scintillator. Simulation results were later used to oversee detector design and construction.
- Spearheaded development of a novel directional neutrino detection technology in scintillator and demonstrated with data for the first time that this can be applied to conduct indirect dark matter searches in scintillator. First ever physics application of neutrino directionality in scintillator. Paper in preparation.

Skills

Software/Tools: GEANT4, ROOT, SolidWorks, AutoCAD, ComSol, Pads
Programming Languages: Proficient in C, C++, Python, Mathematica, Fortran, BASH
Human Languages: English (native), Japanese/Korean (trilingual proficiency)

Leadership

Mentor, UC Berkeley/UCLA March 2016 — *Present*

- Advised 2 students with GEANT4 based optical simulation for current hardware project. Students are now undertaking independent research tasks and contribution original work.
- Taught weekly GEANT4 tutorials to 3 PhD-level students for a semester. Students successfully learned to take on independent simulation projects.

Teaching Assistant, University of Hawaii at Manoa 2007 — 2009

- Planned coursework and taught 2 weekly physics laboratory curriculum for classes of over 20 students each for 3 semesters. Received especially positive reviews for clarity of explanation of material, and teaching style.

Education

PhD, Experimental Particle Physics 2016

- GPA: 3.97/4.00, University of Hawaii at Manoa
- Dissertation: High Energy Neutrino Analysis at KamLAND and Application to Dark Matter Search

Double BS, Physics and Mathematics 2005

- GPA: 4.33/4.50, Sun Moon University, S. Korea
- President's Award 2005, Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement – Samsung Corp.

Presentations and Posters

- Talk: Results from the CUORE experiment
Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF), South Dakota - Conference on Science at SURF 2019 May 2019
- Seminar: Search for Physics Beyond the Standard Model with Neutrinos
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory May 2018
- Invited Talk: Monte Carlo Tools in CUORE
Durham University, UK - Monte Carlo Tools for Beyond the Standard Model Physics Apr 2018
- Seminar: CUORE: A Bolometric Search for Lepton Number Violation
Argonne National Laboratory Feb 2018
- Talk: CUORE and Background Reduction Case Studies for CUPID
Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon University - Division of Nuclear Physics 2017 Oct 2017
- Invited talk: Status of the CUORE $0\nu\beta\beta$ Decay Search
Sanford Underground Research Facility (SURF), South Dakota - Conference on Science at SURF 2017 May 2017
- Invited talk: Particle ID and event reconstruction algorithms in scintillator
Fermilab - Frontiers of Liquid Scintillator Technology Mar 2016
- Seminar: High Energy Analysis at KamLAND and Application to Dark Matter Search
Los Alamos National Laboratory Nov 2015
- Seminar: High Energy Analysis at KamLAND and Application to Dark Matter Search
California Institute of Technology Nov 2015
- Seminar: High Energy Analysis at KamLAND and Application to Dark Matter Search
University of California, Los Angeles Oct 2015
- Talk: High Energy Analysis and Application to Dark Matter Search in KamLAND
University of Hawaii at Manoa - DOE project review Jul 2015
- Poster: Indirect Dark-Matter Detection Through KamLAND
Neutrino 2012, Kyoto, Japan Jun 2012
- Talks: What is a Neutrino?, mini-TimeCube: The World's Smallest Neutrino Detector
University of Hawaii at Manoa - Campus Open-house Nov 2010/2011
- Talk: mini-TimeCube: A Portable Directional Neutrino Detector
Applied Antineutrino Physics 2010, Sendai, Japan Aug 2010
- Talk: KamLAND Summary
University of Hawaii at Manoa - DOE project review Sep 2009
- Talk (Student Presentation): How to solve θ_{23} degeneracy
Fermilab - International Neutrino Summer School 2009 Jul 2009

Statement of Research

I have a strong background in radiation/particle transport simulations and how they affect real particle detector hardware. My expertise also involves processing and analyzing large-scale physics data using analysis tools such as ROOT and Python. I have experience working in 3 multinational collaboration physics experiments where I spearheaded independent research initiatives and successfully interfaced my original work with the larger team. Some of my past accomplishments that I take pride in include development of unprecedented particle detection algorithms that I project will open whole new physics searches by the collaborations that I have worked with.

I have been involved with the CUORE (Cryogenic Underground Observatory for Rare Events) experiment at the University of California, Los Angeles, and University of California, Berkeley since 2016. The main objective of the CUORE experiment is to observe neutrinoless double beta ($0\nu\beta\beta$) decay in ^{130}Te , one of the most rarest processes thought to occur in nature. My work in the collaboration involves developing a GEANT4 based precision background model together with a PhD student colleague to better understand the radioactive contaminations in the detector that undergo α decay. The energy spectrum of the background isotopes that produce α daughters ($\gtrsim 2.7$ MeV) exhibit peculiar features that, if understood correctly, will better explain the types of contamination sources and their distributions in the materials comprising the experiment. This can help us to better understand our background sources and extrapolate this understanding to the energy region of interest (2465 keV to 2575 keV) for $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay in ^{130}Te . I have previously also mentored 2 undergraduate students and worked together with them to simulate and investigate new radioactivity shielding schemes for further background reduction in future $0\nu\beta\beta$ decay experiments that will cover the inverted hierarchy region of the effective Majorana neutrino mass. A paper for our first $0\nu\beta\beta$ analysis using CUORE data was published in March 2018 (<https://arxiv.org/abs/1710.07988>).

I led the development of the GEANT4 simulation code for the mini-TimeCube (mTC) experiment at the University of Hawaii at Manoa from 2009 to 2016. mTC was an ambitious project to build the world's smallest portable neutrino detector. In this project, I mentored 3 students and worked in collaboration with them to conduct case studies for optimizing the detector design, test candidate neutron capture doping elements in plastic scintillator, and simulate the response of the multi-channel-plate (MCP) photomultiplier tubes (PMTs) deployed in the detector. The studies were used to develop directional particle detection algorithms and to guide the overall design of the detector during its construction phase. I have also conducted simulation studies for cosmic-ray muons and long-lived cosmogenic background isotopes such as ^8He and ^9Li . These backgrounds are extremely difficult to tag due to their long life-time (\gtrsim s scale) and travel distances. The studies have been vital to the project. A paper summarizing our accomplishments was published in 2016 (V.A. Li et al. Feb 3, 2016. 19 pp. Rev.Sci.Instrum. 87 (2016) no.2, 021301).

While working at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, I also developed a novel directional event reconstruction algorithm for high-energy \gtrsim GeV scale neutrinos while working with KamLAND (Kamioka Liquid Scintillation Antineutrino Detector), and demonstrated with data that this technique can be applied to indirect dark matter search by looking for a directional flux of neutrinos from the core of the Sun and Earth. Studies done with Monte Carlo suggest that the accuracy of deducing the neutrino direction using this new method is better than that of water-Cherenkov detectors (the conventional method for directional neutrino detection) by $\sim 10^\circ$ in this energy regime. This method was verified using never before observed neutrino events spilling into KamLAND from the T2K neutrino beam-line. The results were consistent with expectation. According to my knowledge, this is the first ever physics application of neutrino directionality in scintillator.

In summary my strong background in radiation/particle transport simulations, as well as, my experience in using tools to analyze large-scale physics data makes me a strong candidate. Also I would like to reemphasize my previous accomplishments in innovating novel particle detection techniques to solve complex problems and interface my original work with a large team of collaborators. I believe I can make a significant impact in your team.

References

*Reference letters supplied upon request or please contact in person.

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