

## Production of Two Single- $\Lambda$ Hypernuclei by $\Xi^-$ Capture

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The  $S = -2$  hypernuclear states formed through  $(K^-, K^+)$  reactions have been studied by using the 1.66 GeV/c  $K^-$  beam provided by KEK Proton Synchrotron. Investigation has been done on the stars due to the capture of the  $\Xi^-$  hyperons at rest in nuclear emulsion, which hyperons were produced in  $(K^-, K^+)$  reactions. We observed a clear case of an absorption of  $\Xi^-$  hyperon at rest by a nucleus followed by a back-to-back emission of two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei.

### § 1. Introduction

The  $(K^-, K^+)$  reaction enables us to study the spectroscopy of  $S = -2$  hypernu-

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clear states. Theoretical studies on this subject have been performed by Dover et al.<sup>1),2)</sup> Baltz et al.<sup>3)</sup> and recently by Akaishi.<sup>4)</sup> Several  $\Xi^-$  hypernuclear species have been identified in nuclear emulsion.<sup>5)</sup> More than twenty years ago, four nuclear states formed in  $K^-$  beam (3–10 GeV/c) experiments were reported by Bechdolf et al.<sup>6)</sup> They have investigated events in which two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei (not collinear) were emitted directly at the point where a  $K^-$  meson interacted with an emulsion nucleus. The production of a  $\Xi^-$  hyperon was assumed and the mass of a  $\Xi^-$  hypernucleus was estimated from these two hypernuclei. However in these cases, since the  $K^-$  meson had a considerable energy when it interacted with a nucleus, a compound  $\Xi^-$  nucleus might be produced and some neutrons could have been emitted in the decay star. For this reason, we cannot take them as a clear sample of  $\Xi^-$ -hypernuclear states. We have therefore carried out an experiment in which a  $\Xi^-$  hyperon was captured by a nucleus at rest. The  $Q$ -value for the production of two single hyperfragments is as small as 10 MeV. Therefore, the two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei event which we report in this paper is a clear case and must be well suited for the investigation of  $\Xi^-$ -nuclear states.

In our emulsion-counter hybrid experiment (E176) performed at KEK, a 1.66 GeV/c  $K^-$  beam was used. The object of this experiment is two-fold: a study of  $S = -2$  hypernuclear states and a research of  $H$  dibaryon. The counter system was used to identify the  $(K^-, K^+)$  reaction which ensures that the strangeness of  $-2$  is transferred to a nucleus in an emulsion target. The emulsion target comprising 43 double-coated sheets (547  $\mu\text{m}$  thick Fuji ET-7B emulsion, coated on both sides of a 70  $\mu\text{m}$  thick polystyrene support) of 23 cm  $\times$  23 cm in size was held perpendicularly to the beam. Thirteen modules of the emulsion targets (30 liters in total volume) were exposed to a total number of  $10^9$   $K^-$  beam mesons. This corresponds to a total number of  $10^8$   $K^-$  interactions in the emulsion. Scattered  $K^+$  mesons from the emulsion target were momentum- and velocity-analyzed by a  $K^+$  spectrometer.

Details of the experimental setup, analysis of the data of counters and procedure of emulsion scanning are described elsewhere.<sup>7)</sup> The  $(K^-, K^+)$  reactions with  $K^+$  momentum greater than 1.0 GeV/c were selected for further analyses, where a quasi-free production ( $K^- + p \rightarrow K^+ + \Xi^-$ ) is dominant.

The total number of  $(K^-, K^+)$  reactions analyzed in the emulsion is 866, and 594  $\Xi^-$  candidates were observed. 99  $\Xi^-$  candidates among them were captured at rest in the nuclear emulsion. In these events, we found a sequential weak decay of a light double- $\Lambda$  hypernucleus and weak decays of heavy double- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei. These were described in detail elsewhere.<sup>8),9)</sup> We searched for the  $H$  dibaryon directly produced by  $K^- + (pp) \rightarrow K^+ + H$  reaction, and obtained an upper limit for the production cross section of the  $H$  dibaryon.<sup>7)</sup> The method of finding and tracing the  $\Xi^-$  hyperon in this process was shown in detail in Refs. 7) and 8). In the process of scanning the emulsion, we found a clear case of  $\Xi^-$  absorption which involves a production of two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei. The detail of this event is described in this paper. This indicates the existence of a  $\Xi^-$  atomic state or a  $\Xi$  hypernuclear state.

§ 2. Description of the event

A photograph and a brief sketch of the event are illustrated in Figs. 1(a) and (b), respectively. It was explained as the event in which the incident  $K^-$  meson interacted with a nucleus of the emulsion at point A and produced a  $E^-$  hyperon (track 2) and a 1137 MeV/c  $K^+$  meson (track 5). Also are seen an evaporation track (track 3) and a recoil track (track 4) at point A. The  $E^-$  hyperon runs until it is captured by a nucleus at rest at point B where two nuclear fragments emitted back to back with each other (i.e., collinear). One of the fragments (track 6) shows the mesonic decay

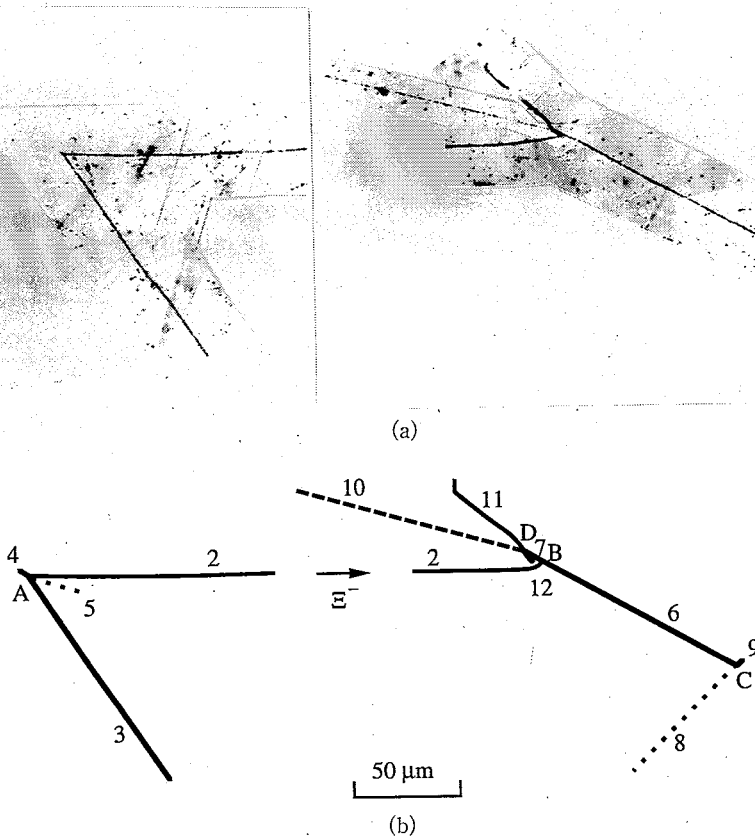


Fig. 1. (a) and (b) A photograph and a schematic drawing of the production of two single-A hypernuclei and their decays. Incident  $K^-$  meson (track 1) can not be seen in this photograph, because  $K^-$  beam was irradiated vertically to the emulsion plates. The  $E^-$  hyperon was produced at point A, and captured at rest at point B followed by the emission of two hyperfragments decaying at point C and point D.

point A:  $K^- + \text{emulsion nucleus} \rightarrow E^- + K^+ + p + \text{recoil}$

point B:  $E^- + {}^{12}\text{C} \rightarrow {}^1_1\text{H} + {}^9_4\text{Be}$

or  $E^- + {}^{14}\text{N} \rightarrow {}^1_1\text{H} + {}^{11}_5\text{B}$

or  $E^- + {}^{16}\text{O} \rightarrow {}^1_1\text{H} + {}^{13}_6\text{C}$

point C:  ${}^1_1\text{H} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^4_2\text{He}$

point D: for example,

${}^9_4\text{Be} \rightarrow {}^4_2\text{He} + {}^2_1\text{H} + p + 2n$ , etc.

Table I. Range and emission angle of each track.

Interaction point	Track number	Presumed identity	Range ( $\mu\text{m}$ )	Dip angle (degrees)	Azimuthal angle (degrees)
Point A	1	$K^-$	$3366.5 \pm 70.7$	0.0	0.0
	2	$\Xi^-$		$42.5 \pm 2.4$	
	3	$p$		$41.0 \pm 2.2$	
	4	Recoil		$90.0 \pm 28.6$	
	5	$K^+$		$11.6 \pm 1.2$	
Point B	6	Hypernucleus	$116.1 \pm 2.2$	$101.4 \pm 2.0$	$324.8 \pm 0.9$
	7	Hypernucleus	$4.7 \pm 0.6$	$76.9 \pm 10.0$	$147.9 \pm 5.0$
Point C <sup>a)</sup>	8	$\pi^-$	$39992.0 \pm 1195.8$	$13.1 \pm 0.5$	$222.2 \pm 1.0$
	9	$^4\text{He}$		$170.7 \pm 0.9$	$46.7 \pm 1.9$
Point D	10	Fast proton	$21796.0 \pm 411.9$	$91.5 \pm 1.0$	$160.4 \pm 0.5$
	11	$^3\text{H}$ etc.	$100.9 \pm 3.2$	$160.4 \pm 2.0$	$122.3 \pm 2.5$
	12	$^4\text{He}$ etc.	$9.2 \pm 1.2$	$47.3 \pm 8.0$	$320.0 \pm 5.0$

a) The emulsion was swollen by water with glycerin to the original thickness, and we could get a better resolution.

into a  $\pi^-$  meson (track 8) and a short recoil (track 9) at the end of the track (point C). The other fragment (track 7) leaves a very short track and emits a fast proton (track 10) with two short tracks (tracks 11 and 12) at point D. The latter is identified as a non-mesonic decay. The results of the measurements of ranges and emission angles of all the charged particles involved in the present event are summarized in Table I.

### § 3. Analysis

The fragment of track 6 is considered a single- $\Lambda$  hypernucleus because it decayed into a  $\pi^-$  meson (track 8) and a stable recoil nucleus (track 9) at point C. The kinetic energies of a  $\pi^-$  meson in the two-body decays of all known light hypernuclei are listed in Table II which were obtained in the foregoing experiments.<sup>10)</sup> The kinetic energy of the  $\pi^-$  meson (track 8) is estimated to be  $51.99 \pm 0.9\%$  MeV from the range measurement. Referring to Table II, this decay is clearly identified as  $^4\text{H} \rightarrow \pi^- + ^4\text{He} + 55.56$  MeV. Table III shows the total kinetic energy  $E_{\text{sum}}$  of this decay process analyzed by two methods, namely, by the use of range-energy relation and that of momentum balance.

On the other hand, the fragment of track 7 is also considered a hypernucleus for the following reasons. We reject the assumption that track 7 is a fast proton from a non-mesonic weak decay at point B which comes to interact with an emulsion nucleus at point D, because the energy loss of track 7 due to ionization is more than 5 times greater than that of track 10 which was identified as a fast proton. There remains another possibility that a  $\Xi^-$  hyperon was captured at point D after being scattered at point B, and overlapped with the emitted  $^4\text{H}$  (track 6) in the section between point D and point B. The probability of such an overlap to occur is, however, topologically less than 1%. Therefore, it is most plausible to consider that the fragment decayed through a weak interaction associating with a fast proton with the kinetic energy of 79.4 MeV derived from the range-energy relation.

Table II. Decay modes for track 6 as a light  $\Lambda$ -hypernucleus decaying into a  $\pi^-$  and a stable nucleus.

Decay mode	$Q_{\text{known}}$ (MeV)	Kinetic energy of $\pi^-$	Remarks
${}^3_1\text{H} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^3_2\text{He}$	$43.16 \pm 0.07$	$40.83 \pm 0.07$	Rejected
${}^4_1\text{H} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^4_2\text{He}$	$55.56 \pm 0.06$	$53.19 \pm 0.06$	Acceptable
${}^6_2\text{He} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^6_3\text{Li}$	$38.20 \pm 0.12$	$37.15 \pm 0.12$	Rejected
${}^7_3\text{Li} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^7_4\text{Be}$	$37.81 \pm 0.06$	$36.92 \pm 0.06$	Rejected
${}^9_3\text{Li} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^9_4\text{Be}$	$46.19 \pm 0.13$	$45.32 \pm 0.13$	Rejected
${}^{10}_4\text{Be} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^{10}_5\text{B}$	$35.26 \pm 0.23$	$34.68 \pm 0.22$	Rejected
${}^{12}_5\text{B} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^{12}_6\text{C}$	$42.36 \pm 0.08$	$41.76 \pm 0.08$	Rejected
${}^{14}_6\text{C} \rightarrow \pi^- + {}^{14}_7\text{N}$	$33.16 \pm 0.33$	$32.77 \pm 0.33$	Rejected

Table III. Total kinetic energy  $E_{\text{sum}}$  calculated with the use of range-energy relation<sup>a)</sup> and momentum balance in the  ${}^4_1\text{H} \rightarrow {}^4_2\text{He} + \pi^-$  reaction.

	Momentum (MeV/c) (Kinetic energy (MeV))		$E_{\text{sum}}$ (MeV)
	$\pi^-$	${}^4_2\text{He}$	
Range-energy	$131.21^{+1.38}_{-1.41}$ ( $51.99^{+0.95}_{-0.96}$ )	$139.64^{+3.30}_{-3.45}$ ( $2.62 \pm 0.13$ )	$54.60^{+0.96}_{-0.97}$
Momentum balance	$131.21^{+1.38}_{-1.41}$ ( $51.99^{+0.95}_{-0.96}$ )	$131.21^{+1.38}_{-1.41}$ ( $2.31 \pm 0.05$ )	$54.30^{+1.00}_{-1.01}$

a) The range-energy relation had been calibrated by measuring the ranges of  $\alpha$ -particles (emitted from ThC') and muons (decay products of stopped  $\pi^+$ ).

Table IV. Momenta and kinetic energies in the  $\Xi^- + (\text{C, N, O}) \rightarrow {}^A_1\text{H} + {}_A\text{X}$  reaction.

	Momentum (MeV/c) (Kinetic energy (MeV))			
	${}^A_1\text{H}$	${}_A\text{X}$		
		${}^9_2\text{Be}$	${}^{11}_5\text{B}$	${}^{13}_6\text{C}$
Range-energy	$224.60^{+1.47}_{-1.48}$ ( $6.43^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$ )	$238.63^{+15.68}_{-15.61}$ ( $3.33 \pm 0.48$ )	$301.86^{+21.62}_{-23.04}$ ( $4.37^{+0.65}_{-0.64}$ )	$363.89^{+28.78}_{-28.56}$ ( $5.39^{+0.89}_{-0.81}$ )
Momentum balance	$224.60^{+1.47}_{-1.48}$ ( $6.43^{+0.08}_{-0.08}$ )	$(2.95 \pm 0.04)$	$224.60^{+1.47}_{-1.48}$ ( $2.42 \pm 0.03$ )	$(2.05^{+0.03}_{-0.02})$

As there is a track with a short range of  $9.2 \mu\text{m}$  (track 12) at point D, the hyperfragment of track 7 must be a light hypernucleus. It should be noted that the energy of this particle is insufficient to surmount the Coulomb barrier of heavy emulsion nuclei (Ag, Br).<sup>11)</sup>

Since two light hypernuclei were emitted back to back with each other and no Auger electron was found<sup>12)</sup> at point B, it is obvious that the  $\Xi^-$  hyperon was captured at rest by a light emulsion nucleus ( ${}^{12}\text{C}$ ,  ${}^{14}\text{N}$  or  ${}^{16}\text{O}$ ). Consequently, it will be enough to discuss the following candidates for the reaction process at point B:

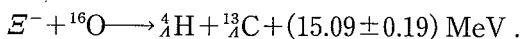
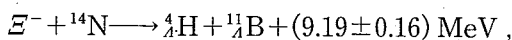
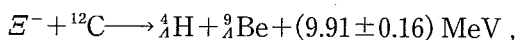
Table V. Expected range of a hypernucleus (track 7) which is deduced using the momentum balance to  ${}^1_0\text{H}$ .

Hypernucleus	Expected Range ( $\mu\text{m}$ ) <sup>a)</sup>	Remarks
in case of ${}^9_0\text{Be}$	4.2	Most probable
in case of ${}^{11}_0\text{B}$	2.9	Not rejected
in case of ${}^{13}_0\text{C}$	2.1	Not rejected

a) See text about the error of expected ranges.

Table VI. Observed total kinetic energy  $E_{\text{sum}}$  and the energy difference  $\Delta Q$  subtracting the known  $Q$ -value from  $E_{\text{sum}}$ .

	${}^1_0\text{H} + {}^9_0\text{Be}$	${}^1_0\text{H} + {}^{11}_0\text{B}$	${}^1_0\text{H} + {}^{13}_0\text{C}$
$E_{\text{sum}}(\text{MeV})$	$9.37 \pm 0.12$	$8.84 \pm 0.12$	$8.48 \pm_{-0.11}^{+0.12}$
$\Delta Q(\text{MeV})$	$-0.54 \pm 0.20$	$-0.35 \pm 0.20$	$-6.62 \pm_{-0.23}^{+0.22}$



We estimated the momenta and kinetic energies of track 7 for three cases ( ${}^9_0\text{Be}$ ,  ${}^{11}_0\text{B}$  and  ${}^{13}_0\text{C}$ ) using the two methods mentioned above. The results are summarized in Table IV. It should be noted that the reliability of range-energy relation decreases as the range becomes shorter. For this reason, the observed range ( $4.7 \pm 0.6 \mu\text{m}$ <sup>\*)</sup> of track 7 was compared with the expected ranges in the three cases satisfying the momentum balance with track 6 ( ${}^1_0\text{H}$ ). The expected ranges are shown in Table V where the error of each number is  $0.2 \mu\text{m}$ . This error was derived from the momentum error of  ${}^1_0\text{H}$  and an extrapolation of the range-straggling found in the Ilford nuclear emulsion data.<sup>12)</sup> There are no data of range-straggling in the very low energy region (i.e., less than a few MeV). Thus none of the three cases were rejected, but  ${}^9_0\text{Be}$  was found to be most probable for track 7. Table VI lists the total observed kinetic energies carried by two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei and their energy differences  $\Delta Q$  with respect to the known  $Q$ -values for the three cases.

#### § 4. Discussion and conclusion

In current stage, it should be noted that the energy differences  $\Delta Q$  are obtained by subtracting the known  $Q$  value from the total observed kinetic energy for the three cases, although it is not easy to determine the reaction process uniquely. The  $\Delta Q$  values are  $-0.54 \pm 0.20 \text{ MeV}$ ,  $-0.35 \pm 0.20 \text{ MeV}$  and  $-6.62 \pm_{-0.23}^{+0.22} \text{ MeV}$  for  $E^- + {}^{12}_6\text{C}$ ,  $E^- + {}^{14}_7\text{N}$  and  $E^- + {}^{16}_8\text{O}$ , respectively. These energy differences  $\Delta Q$  seem too large to be explained as an experimental error. We suggest two possibilities for the interpretation of this discrepancy.

\*) We moreover need to consider the error of the range of track 7 caused by the ambiguity of the  $E^-$  stop position. That value should be about  $0.7 \mu\text{m}$  which is the typical grain size of emulsion.

The first possibility is that the  $E^-$  hyperon was captured by a light emulsion atom ( $^{12}\text{C}$ ,  $^{14}\text{N}$  or  $^{16}\text{O}$ ) at rest, and a  $E^-$  atom was created. The  $E^-$  hyperon changed its orbit to lower level with the emission of  $\gamma$ -ray, and an energy corresponding to  $\Delta Q$  was carried away at this stage. Then the  $E^-$  hyperon in the atomic orbit interacted with one of protons in the nucleus and two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei were finally produced. The second possibility is the formation of a  $E$  nucleus. Concerning both the atomic states and the nuclear states, the theoretical calculation has been performed by Akaishi.<sup>4),13)</sup> For the case of  $E^-$  capture in a  $^{12}\text{C}$ , he suggests the existence of an atomic state and the mixing between an atomic and a nuclear state.

In this experiment, we have found the evidence of the production of two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei through the process of  $E^-$  capture at rest by a light nucleus ( $^{12}\text{C}$ ,  $^{14}\text{N}$  or  $^{16}\text{O}$ ) in the nuclear emulsion. The statistical treatment and determination of cross section for the production of two single- $\Lambda$  hypernuclei will be discussed elsewhere.<sup>14)</sup>

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- 13) The level energies and widths of both the  $^{12}\text{C}+E^-$  and  $^{12}\text{B}+E^0$  systems are calculated by Akaishi<sup>4)</sup> with the use of a nucleus- $E$  potential of Woods-Saxon type as follows:

$$U_{\text{nucl-}\Xi}(r) = -\frac{V_0 + iW_0}{1 + \exp\{(r-R)/a\}},$$

where  $V_0=24$  MeV,  $W_0=3$  MeV,  $R=1.1 \times A^{1/3}$  and  $a=0.65$  fm. The atomic level of the '1s' state in the  $^{12}\text{C} + \Xi^-$  system is shifted by a strong interaction between a  $\Xi^-$  hyperon and  $^{12}\text{C}$  nuclei. This '1s' atomic state is  $-0.55(\Gamma=0.1)$  MeV. The 0s nuclear state in the  $^{12}\text{B} + \Xi^0$  system is very close to the '1s' atomic state and lies under the threshold of the  $^{12}\text{C} + \Xi^-$  system by  $-0.47(\Gamma=3.7)$  MeV. Therefore, there is a possibility of the mixing of the '1s' atomic state in the  $^{12}\text{C} + \Xi^-$  system and the 0s nuclear state in the  $^{12}\text{B} + \Xi^0$  system.

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