

## Observation of the Decay $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$

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We report the measurement of the charmed baryonic decay  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  with a branching fraction of  $(2.19_{-0.49}^{+0.56} \pm 0.32 \pm 0.57) \times 10^{-5}$  and a statistical significance of  $5.8\sigma$ . The errors are statistical, systematic, and the error of the  $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^-\pi^+$  decay branching fraction. This is the first observation of a two-body baryonic  $B$  decay. The analysis is based on  $78.2 \text{ fb}^{-1}$  of data accumulated at the  $Y(4S)$  resonance with the Belle detector at the KEKB asymmetric  $e^+e^-$  collider.

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Although the four- and three-body baryonic  $B$  decays  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^+ \pi^-$  and  $B^- \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^-$  are experimentally well established [1,2], there has been, until now, no reported observation of any two-body mode, such as  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$ . In a previous Belle analysis, based on a  $29.1 \text{ fb}^{-1}$  data sample [2], we obtained the following branching fractions for four-, three- and two-body decays:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{B}(\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^+ \pi^-) \\ = (11.04_{-1.17}^{+1.22} \pm 1.98 \pm 2.87) \times 10^{-4}, \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{B}(B^- \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^-) \\ = (1.87_{-0.40}^{+0.43} \pm 0.28 \pm 0.49) \times 10^{-4}, \end{aligned}$$

$$\mathcal{B}(\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}) < 0.31 \times 10^{-4} \quad (90\% \text{ confidence level}).$$

The measured branching fractions decrease rapidly with decreasing decay multiplicity. This suppression of lower multiplicity decays is a key issue in the understanding of the mechanism behind charmed baryonic  $B$  decays.

There are several different theoretical calculations for the  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  branching fraction, based on a diquark model [3], a QCD sum rule model [4], and pole models

[5,6]. They differ by an order of magnitude. Thus, a measurement of the two-body decay  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  branching fraction would distinguish between these different theoretical approaches and provide important insight into the underlying physics.

In this Letter we report the first observation of the two-body decay  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$ . The analysis is based on a data sample of  $78.2 \text{ fb}^{-1}$  accumulated at the  $Y(4S)$  resonance with the Belle detector at the KEKB 8 GeV  $e^-$  on 3.5 GeV  $e^+$  asymmetric collider.

The Belle detector is a large-solid-angle magnetic spectrometer that consists of a three-layer silicon vertex detector (SVD), a 50-layer cylindrical drift chamber (CDC), a mosaic of aerogel threshold Čerenkov counters (ACC), a barrel-like array of time-of-flight scintillation counters (TOF), and an array of CsI(Tl) crystals (ECL) located inside a superconducting solenoidal coil that provides a 1.5 T magnetic field. An iron flux return located outside the coil is instrumented to detect muons and  $K_L$  mesons (KLM). The detector is described in detail elsewhere [7]. We use a GEANT based Monte Carlo (MC) simulation to model the response of the detector and determine its acceptance [8].

We detect the  $\Lambda_c^+$  via the  $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^-\pi^+$  decay channel. Inclusion of charge conjugate states is implicit unless otherwise stated. The particle identification (PID) information from the CDC, ACC, and TOF is used to construct likelihood functions  $L_p$ ,  $L_K$ , and  $L_\pi$  for the proton, kaon, and pion assignment for all charged tracks, respectively. Likelihood ratios  $LR(A/B) = L_A/(L_A + L_B)$  are required to be greater than 0.6 to identify a particle from  $\Lambda_c^+$  decay as type  $A$ , where  $B$  denotes the other two possible assignments among kaon, pion, or proton. In order to maintain high efficiency for the high momentum prompt antiproton that comes directly from the primary  $\bar{B}^0$  meson decay, we rely more heavily on the kinematic reconstruction and loosen the PID requirement to  $LR(A/B) > 0.2$ , which improves the efficiency by a factor of about 20%. Electron and muon candidates are removed if their combined likelihood ratios from the ECL, CDC, and KLM information are greater than 0.95. A  $\Lambda_c^+$  candidate is selected if the invariant mass  $M(pK^-\pi^+)$  is within  $0.010 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  ( $2.5 \sigma$ ) of the  $2.285 \text{ GeV}/c^2$   $\Lambda_c^+$  mass. A  $\Lambda_c^+$  mass constrained fit is carried out at the reconstructed  $\Lambda_c^+$  decay vertex to remove background including secondary particles from  $\Lambda$  or  $K_S$  decay.

The  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  events are identified by their energy difference  $\Delta E = (\sum E_i) - E_{\text{beam}}$ , and the beam-energy constrained mass  $M_{\text{bc}} = \sqrt{E_{\text{beam}}^2 - (\sum \vec{p}_i)^2}$ , where  $E_{\text{beam}}$  is the beam energy, and  $\vec{p}_i$  and  $E_i$  are the three-momenta and energies of the  $B$  meson decay products, all defined in the center-of-mass system of the  $e^+e^-$  collision. We select events with  $M_{\text{bc}} > 5.20 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  and  $|\Delta E| < 0.20 \text{ GeV}$ .

The prompt antiproton track and the virtual  $\Lambda_c^+$  track are required to form a common  $B$  mass constrained decay vertex. To suppress continuum background, we impose requirements on event-shape variables. We require  $|\cos\theta_{\text{thr}}| < 0.80$ , where  $\theta_{\text{thr}}$  is the angle between the thrust axis of the  $B$  candidate tracks and that of the other tracks. This requirement eliminates 80% of the continuum background and retains 80% of the signal events. We also require  $R_2 < 0.35$ , where  $R_2$  is the ratio of the second to the zeroth Fox-Wolfram moments [9]. This requirement rejects 50% of the remaining continuum background and retains 90% of the signal. If there are multiple candidates in an event, the candidate with the best  $\chi_B^2$  for the  $B$  vertex fit is selected.

Figure 1 shows a scatter plot of  $\Delta E$  versus  $M_{\text{bc}}$  and their projections for selected events. The  $\Delta E$  projection is shown for  $M_{\text{bc}} > 5.270 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  and the  $M_{\text{bc}}$  projection is shown for  $|\Delta E| < 0.030 \text{ GeV}$ . The widths determined from single Gaussian fits to signal MC events are  $2.7 \text{ MeV}/c^2$  and  $10.3 \text{ MeV}$  for  $M_{\text{bc}}$  and  $\Delta E$ , respectively. A two-dimensional binned maximum likelihood fit is performed to determine the signal yield. For this fit, the  $\Delta E$  distribution is represented by a double Gaussian for the signal plus a first order polynomial for the background, and the  $M_{\text{bc}}$  distribution is represented by a single Gaussian for the signal plus the ARGUS function [10] for the background. The region  $\Delta E < -0.1 \text{ GeV}$  is excluded from the fit to avoid feed down from modes including extra pions, which produces the bump structure observed in the region  $\Delta E \leq -0.15 \text{ GeV}$ . In the fit, the signal shape parameters are fixed to the values fitted to the

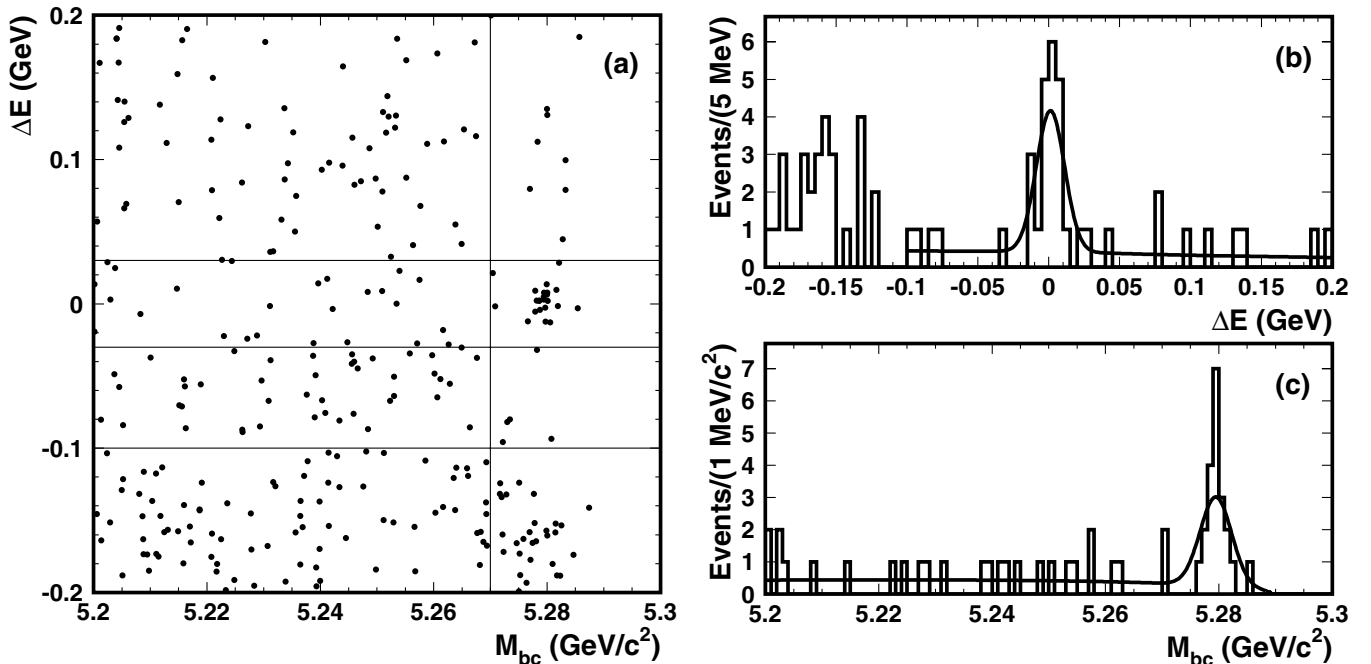


FIG. 1. Candidate  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  events: (a) scatter plot of  $\Delta E$  versus  $M_{\text{bc}}$ , (b)  $\Delta E$  distribution for  $M_{\text{bc}} > 5.270 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ , and (c)  $M_{\text{bc}}$  distribution for  $|\Delta E| < 0.030 \text{ GeV}$ . The curves indicate the result of a two-dimensional fit.

signal MC, and the signal yield and the background parameters are allowed to float. The curves in Fig. 1(b) and 1(c) indicate the results of this two-dimensional fit.

The signal peak positions determined from fits to the data,  $(5279.5 \pm 0.3) \text{ MeV}/c^2$  for  $M_{bc}$  and  $(0.9 \pm 1.8) \text{ MeV}$  for  $\Delta E$ , are consistent with the world average  $B^0$  mass [11] and zero, respectively. When we use single Gaussians for  $M_{bc}$  and  $\Delta E$  signal functions and fit with the widths as free parameters, the fitted values in the data are found to be  $(1.3 \pm 0.3) \text{ MeV}/c^2$  and  $(6.9 \pm 1.5) \text{ MeV}$ , respectively, which are narrower than those determined with the signal MC. The probability of obtaining such narrow widths is  $\mathcal{O}(1\%)$  and is attributed to a statistical fluctuation. We also investigate the decays  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^+ \pi^-$ ,  $B^- \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^-$  and  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow J/\psi \bar{K}^*(892)^0$ ,  $J/\psi \rightarrow p \bar{p}$  as control samples, and find that for these modes  $M_{bc}$  and  $\Delta E$  widths are consistent between the data and signal MC. The effect of the narrow widths to the signal yield is investigated by applying fits where single Gaussians with widths allowed to float are used for the signal shapes. The difference in the fitted yields is taken into account in a systematic error as discussed below.

From the fit we obtain  $19.6_{-4.4}^{+5.0}$  signal events. From separate fits to the charge conjugate modes we obtain signal yields of  $6.4_{-2.4}^{+3.0}$  and  $13.3_{-3.5}^{+4.2}$  events for  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  and  $B^0 \rightarrow \bar{\Lambda}_c^- p$ , respectively. These are consistent within statistical errors.

The branching fraction is calculated as  $N_S/[\varepsilon \times N_{B\bar{B}} \times \mathcal{B}(\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^- \pi^+)]$ , using the measured signal yield  $N_S$  and the decay branching fraction  $\mathcal{B}(\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^- \pi^+) = (5.0 \pm 1.3)\%$  [11]. The detection efficiency  $\varepsilon$  is evaluated to be 21.1% from the signal MC. The number of  $B\bar{B}$  pairs  $N_{B\bar{B}}$  is  $(85.0 \pm 0.5) \times 10^6$ . The fractions of charged and neutral  $B$  mesons are assumed to be the same.

We obtain a branching fraction of

$$\mathcal{B}(\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}) = (2.19_{-0.49}^{+0.56} \pm 0.32 \pm 0.57) \times 10^{-5},$$

where the first and the second errors are statistical and systematic, respectively. The last error of 26% is due to uncertainty in the branching fraction  $\mathcal{B}(\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^- \pi^+)$ .

The total systematic error of 14.8% is determined as follows. The tracking systematic error is estimated to be 8% in total, assuming a correlated systematic error of 2% per charged track, based on tracking efficiency studies with  $\eta \rightarrow \gamma\gamma$  and  $\eta \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^- \pi^0$  samples. The PID systematic error is 10% in total, assuming a correlated systematic error of 3% per proton and 2% per pion or kaon, based on studies with a  $\Lambda \rightarrow p\pi^-$  sample for protons; and with a  $D^{*+} \rightarrow D^0 \pi^+$ ,  $D^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+$  sample for kaons and pions. The systematic error in the fitting procedure and signal shape is estimated to be 7.3%, which is half of the maximum deviation in the branching fractions obtained with various modifications to the fitting functions: with a single or a double Gaussian for the  $\Delta E$  signal, with the widths and means for both  $M_{bc}$  and  $\Delta E$  signals fixed to MC determined values or fitted in the

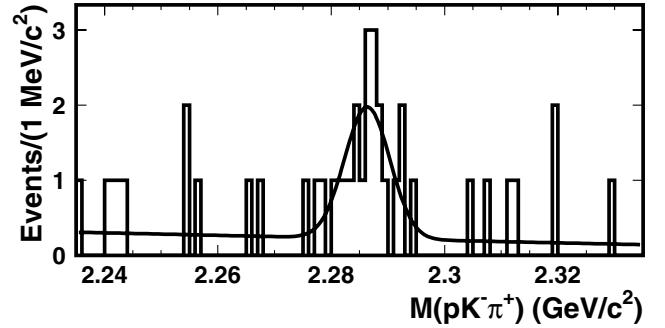


FIG. 2. Invariant mass  $M(pK^- \pi^+)$  distribution for  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  candidates in the  $B$  signal region.

data. Finally, the systematic error in the detection efficiency due to MC statistics is 1.3%.

Figure 2 shows the invariant mass distribution  $M(pK^- \pi^+)$  for  $B$  candidates in the signal region  $|\Delta E| < 0.030 \text{ GeV}$  and  $M_{bc} > 5.27 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ . The curve indicates a fit result with a Gaussian over linear background. The fitted width of  $(4.0 \pm 1.0) \text{ MeV}/c^2$  and the fitted mean of  $(2286.4 \pm 1.3) \text{ MeV}/c^2$  are consistent with values obtained from fits to signal MC events, which are generated assuming the world average  $\Lambda_c^+$  mass [11]. We obtain a  $\Lambda_c^+$  yield of  $17.5_{-4.6}^{+5.2}$  events, consistent with the  $B$  signal yield mentioned above.

We consider a contribution in the  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  signal yield from other  $B$  decays, which gives a uniform distribution in the  $\Lambda_c^+$  invariant mass. We analyze the  $\Lambda_c^+$  sideband  $0.015 < |M(pK^- \pi^+) - M_{\Lambda_c^+}| < 0.050 \text{ GeV}/c^2$ , and obtain a  $B$  signal yield of  $1.2_{-2.4}^{+3.2}$  events, which is consistent with expectation of  $1.4 \pm 0.4$  events from the  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  decay MC, assuming our observed branching fraction. From this we estimate the other  $B$  decay contribution of  $(-0.1_{-0.7}^{+0.9})$  events in the  $\Lambda_c^+$  signal region, which is negligibly small. From a simultaneous fit of the  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  signal yield and the other  $B$  decay contribution in the  $\Lambda_c^+$  signal and sideband regions, we obtain a statistical significance of  $5.8 \sigma$ . The significance is calculated as  $\sqrt{-2 \ln(\mathcal{L}_0/\mathcal{L}_{\max})}$ , where  $\mathcal{L}_{\max}$  and  $\mathcal{L}_0$  denote the maximum likelihoods with the fitted signal yield and with the yield fixed at zero, respectively.

We investigate the  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  decay in MC with all known  $\Lambda_c^+$  decay modes [11]. The overall detection efficiency for the  $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^- \pi^+$  final state, including intermediate resonances, is found to be consistent with that calculated for the nonresonant  $\Lambda_c^+ \rightarrow pK^- \pi^+$  decay alone. The other  $\Lambda_c^+$  decays show no peaking structure in the  $\Delta E$  and  $M_{bc}$  distributions.

Finally, the overall systematics are checked by analyzing the decay mode  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow J/\psi \bar{K}^*(892)^0$  observed as  $J/\psi \rightarrow p \bar{p}$  and  $\bar{K}^*(892)^0 \rightarrow K^- \pi^+$ , which contains the same final state particles as the mode under study. A similar analysis procedure is applied, except for the  $\Lambda_c^+$  vertex fit. A  $J/\psi$  is tagged if the measured invariant mass

$M(p\bar{p})$  is within  $0.019 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  of the  $J/\psi$  mass. A  $\bar{K}^*(892)^0$  is tagged if the measured invariant mass  $M(K^-\pi^+)$  is within  $0.2 \text{ GeV}/c^2$  of the  $K^*(892)^0$  mass. Vertex fits are also carried out at the  $J/\psi$  and  $B$  vertices. We obtain a signal of  $23.7_{-4.9}^{+5.6}$  events and a branching fraction of  $\mathcal{B}[\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow J/\psi \bar{K}^*(892)^0] = (1.02_{-0.21}^{+0.24} \pm 0.14) \times 10^{-3}$ , which is consistent with previous measurements [11,12].

In summary, we report the measurement of the charmed baryonic  $B$  decay  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$  with a branching fraction of  $(2.19_{-0.49}^{+0.56} \pm 0.32 \pm 0.57) \times 10^{-5}$  and a statistical significance of  $5.8 \sigma$ . This is the first observation of a two-body baryonic  $B$  decay. The branching fraction is found to be about an order-of-magnitude smaller than that of the three-body decay  $B^- \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p} \pi^-$ . This suppression is a unique feature of two-body baryonic decays; in contrast, the two- and three-body mesonic  $B$  decays are comparable. A pole model [6] predicts a value of the branching fraction of  $\leq (1.1 - 3.1) \times 10^{-5}$  for  $\bar{B}^0 \rightarrow \Lambda_c^+ \bar{p}$ , which is consistent with our measurement, while the other models [3–5] give substantially larger values. Charmless baryonic two-body decays are expected to be suppressed by an additional factor of  $|V_{ub}/V_{cb}|^2$  [11]. The result reported here implies that their branching fractions should not be much above the  $10^{-7}$  level, which are consistent with the present upper limits [13].

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