This is a repository copy of *Experimental study of 4n with 8He(p,2p) reaction*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/171692/

Version: Published Version

**Article:**
Huang, S. W., Marqués, F. M., Achouri, N. L. et al. (89 more authors) (2020) Experimental study of 4n with 8He(p,2p) reaction. Journal of Physics: Conference Series. 012090. ISSN 1742-6596

https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1643/1/012090

---

**Reuse**
This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) licence. This licence allows you to distribute, remix, tweak, and build upon the work, even commercially, as long as you credit the authors for the original work. More information and the full terms of the licence here:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

**Takedown**
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.
Experimental study of $^4n$ with $^8\text{He}(p,2p)$ reaction

To cite this article: S. W. Huang et al 2020 J. Phys.: Conf. Ser. 1643 012090

View the article online for updates and enhancements.
Experimental study of $^4n$ with $^8\text{He}(p,2p)$ reaction

S. W. Huang$^{1,2}$, Z. H. Yang$^{3,2,*}$, F. M. Marqués$^4$, N. L. Achouri$^4$, D. S. Ahn$^2$, T. Aumann$^{5,6}$, H. Baba$^2$, D. Beaumel$^7$, M. Böhmer$^8$, K. Boretzky$^{6,9}$, M. Caamaño$^9$, S. Chen$^{10}$, N. Chiga$^2$, M. L. Cortés$^2$, D. Cortina$^9$, P. Doornenbal$^2$, C. A. Douma$^{11}$, F. Dufter$^8$, J. Feng$^{1,2}$, B. Fernández-Domínguez$^2$, Z. Elekes$^{12,2}$, U. Forsberg$^{13,25}$, T. Fujino$^{14}$, N. Fukuda$^2$, I. Gašparić$^{15,2}$, Z. Ge$^2$, R. Gernhäuser$^4$, J. M. Gheller$^{16}$, J. Gibelin$^4$, A. Gillibert$^{16}$, B. M. Godoy$^4$, Z. Halász$^{12}$, T. Harada$^{17,2}$, M. N. Harakeh$^{6,41}$, A. Hirayama$^{18,2}$, N. Inabe$^2$, T. Isobe$^2$, J. Kahlbow$^{5,2}$, N. Kalantar-Nayestanaki$^{11}$, D. Kim$^{19}$, S. Kim$^{19}$, M. A. Knösel$^5$, T. Kobayashi$^{20}$, Y. Kondo$^{18}$, P. Koseoglou$^{5,6}$, Y. Kubota$^2$, I. Kuti$^{12}$, C. Lehr$^{5,2}$, P. J. Li$^{10}$, Y. Liu$^{1,2}$, Y. Maeda$^{21}$, S. Masuoka$^{22}$, M. Matsumoto$^{18,2}$, J. Mayer$^{23}$, H. Miki$^{18}$, M. Miwa$^{24,2}$, I. Murray$^2$, T. Nakamura$^{18}$, A. Obertelli$^4$, N. Orr$^4$, H. Otsu$^2$, V. Panin$^2$, S. Park$^{19}$, M. Parlog$^4$, S. Paschalidis$^{6,13}$, M. Potlog$^{26}$, S. Reichert$^4$, A. Revel$^{27}$, D. Rossi$^2$, A. Saito$^{18}$, M. Sasaki$^3$, H. Sato$^2$, H. Scheit$^5$, F. Schindler$^8$, T. Shimada$^{18}$, Y. Shimizu$^2$, S. Shimoura$^{22}$, I. Stefan$^7$, S. Storck$^5$, L. Stuhl$^{22}$, H. Suzuki$^7$, D. Symochko$^4$, H. Takeda$^2$, S. Takeuchi$^{18}$, J. Tanaka$^{6,8}$, Y. Togano$^{14,2}$, T. Tomai$^{18,2}$, H. T. Törnyvits$^{6,2}$, J. Tscheuschner$^5$, T. Uesaka$^2$, V. Wagner$^4$, K. Wimmer$^{22}$, H. Yamada$^{18}$, B. Yang$^{1,2}$, L. Yang$^{22}$, Y. Yasuda$^{18,2}$, K. Yoneda$^2$, L. Zanetti$^{28,2}$, T. Elidiano$^4$ and C. Lenain$^4$

$^1$ School of Physics and State Key Laboratory of Nuclear Physics and Technology, Peking University, Beijing 100871, China
$^2$ RIKEN Nishina Center, 2-1 Hirosawa, Wako, Saitama 351-0198, Japan
$^3$ Research Center for Nuclear Physics, Osaka University, Ibaraki, Osaka 567-0047, Japan
$^4$ LPC Caen, ENSICAEN, Université de Caen, CNRS/IN2P3, F-14050 CAEN Cedex, France
$^5$ Institut für Kernphysik, Technische Universität Darmstadt, D-64289 Darmstadt, Germany
$^6$ GSI Helmholtzzentrum für Schwerionenforschung, 64291 Darmstadt, Germany
$^7$ Institut de Physique Nucléaire Orsay, IN2P3-CNRS, 91406 Orsay Cedex, France
$^8$ Technische Universität München, 85748 Garching, Germany
Abstract. The tetraneutron has attracted the attention of nuclear physicists during the past decades, but there is still no unambiguous confirmation of its existence or non-existence. A new experiment based on $^8\text{He}(p,2p)^7\text{H}\{t+4n\}$ reaction, with direct detection of the four neutrons, has been carried out at RIBF, which can hopefully help to draw a definite conclusion on the tetraneutron system.

1. Introduction

Many-neutron systems made of the chargeless neutrons, especially the tetraneutron($^4n$), have attracted a lot of attention of the nuclear physics community in recent years. Their existence, whether as bound or resonant states, is of fundamental importance in nuclear physics, serving as a sensitive probe to investigate the nuclear force free from the Coulomb interaction. Their properties are also crucial for a deeper understanding of neutron stars [1,2].
Many experimental trials have been made in search of the very exotic $^4n$ state in the past decades. However, all these attempts failed to draw a firm conclusion due to the extremely low statistics. In 2002, Marqués et al. [3] reported the possible existence of a bound or low-lying resonant $^4n$ state observed in the breakup reaction of $^{14}\text{Be} \rightarrow ^{10}\text{Be} + ^4n$ channel. Another experiment using the $^4\text{He}(^3\text{He},^8\text{Be})^4n$ reaction found the candidate resonant state with an energy $E_R = 0.83 \pm 0.65(\text{stat}) \pm 1.25(\text{syst})$ MeV above the $4n$ threshold and a width $\Gamma \leq 2.6$ MeV [4].

Motivated by the experimental hints, many theoretical calculations were performed to study the tetraneutron system [5-11]. All of them agree that a bound state is ruled out based on standard nuclear forces but the existence of a tetraneutron as a low-lying resonant state is still under debate. It is supported by some theoretical models including Quantum Monte Carlo (QMC) [12] and No-Core Shell Model (NCSM) calculations [13] while some other $ab$-initio calculations exclude such a resonant $^4n$ state [8,9] since large (unrealistic) modifications of the three-body force would be necessary in order to reproduce the $^4n$ resonance reported in [4].

Here, we report a new experiment on $^4n$ by using the $^8\text{He}(p,2p)^7\text{H}\{t+^4n\}$ reaction at the RIKEN Radioactive Isotope Beam Factory (RIBF) facility.

2. Experimental Methods
The $^8\text{He}(p,2p)^7\text{H}\{t+^4n\}$ experiment was carried out in inverse kinematics at RIBF in 2017. The $^8\text{He}$ secondary beam with an energy of 150 MeV/nucleon was produced through the projectile fragmentation reaction from the $^{18}\text{O}$ primary beam bombarding on a $^9\text{Be}$ primary target, and then purified and transported through the BigRIPS fragment separator [14]. The incident beam can be identified by TOF-$\Delta E$ method on an event-by-event basis. The trajectories of beam particles can be reconstructed from two multi-wire drift chambers (BDC1, BDC2) located upstream of the target. The $^8\text{He}$ beam with an intensity of $10^5$ pps impinged onto the 150 mm-thick liquid hydrogen target MINOS [15] which can offer high luminosity and $^7\text{H}$ was then produced by the $(p,2p)$ reaction.

![Figure 1. Schematic view of the experimental setup.](image)

Figure 1 shows the schematic view of the experimental setup. The key ingredient of our experiment is the kinematically complete measurement of all the reaction products. The recoil
protons were tracked by the TPC surrounding the liquid hydrogen target and then detected in coincidence by an array of 36 NaI crystals [16], arranged in two symmetric rings. The energy resolution of the NaI scintillators was around 1% (FWHM) for 80 MeV protons. Energy calibration was performed by measuring the proton-proton elastic scattering at 175 MeV with the same setup. The trajectories of two protons are essential to reconstruct the reaction vertex in such experiments with a thick target.

Charged fragments were deflected in the SAMURAI [17] dipole magnet from the path of the neutrons. They passed through two drift chambers (FDC1, FDC2) located at the entrance and exit of the dipole magnet and finally detected by the HODO plastic scintillator array. The multiple neutron detection is crucial but extremely challenging in this kind of multi-neutron studies. The neutrons were detected by two plastic scintillator arrays, the NeuLAND demonstrator from GSI and the existing NEBULA array, placed downstream of the dipole magnet, which can together provide the highest $4n$ detection efficiency ($\epsilon_{4n} \sim 1\%$) at present. In addition, since we have access to the complete 7-body kinematics of the final state ($2p+t+4n$), we can also obtain the invariant mass of $^7H$ and $^4n$ by measuring only 3 of the 4 neutrons. The statistics can be enhanced markedly by this so-called “Missing-Invariant-Mass method” since the detection efficiency close to the threshold for $3n$ can be 10 times or more higher than that for $4n$.

3. Preliminary results
As shown in figure 2(a), tritons and $^6He$ can be separated clearly using the TOF-ΔE method. Figure 2(b) shows the polar-angle correlation for the two recoil protons in coincidence with triton fragments.

![Figure 2.](image)

We first analyzed the $^6He+n$ channel, populated in the $(p,pn)$ reaction, to validate the momentum analysis of fragments and neutrons. As shown in figure 3(a), the relative-energy spectrum of $^7He$ reconstructed from $^6He$ and one neutron exhibits a clear peak at around 0.4 MeV, in good agreement with previous works [18,19]. We also reconstructed the angular distribution of the polar angle $\psi$ defined as the angle between the $^6He$ momentum $p_{^6He}$ and $^6He-n$ relative momentum $p_{^6He-n}$ [20]. As shown in figure 3(b), it is anisotropic but symmetric with respect to 90°, consistent with previous work [19,21].
The multi-neutron analysis is now in progress, for which rejection of crosstalk is essential. A crosstalk rejection algorithm based on the time-space separation and the energy deposition of the recorded hitting signals has been well established [22] and will be optimized in the current measurement according to the real experimental setup.

Acknowledgements
We acknowledge the support of the RIBF accelerator staff and the BigRIPS team for providing the high-quality beam. Z. H. Yang acknowledges the financial support from the Foreign Postdoctoral Researcher program of RIKEN. T. Aumann acknowledges the support by DFG via SFB 1245. P. Koseoglou acknowledges the support from BMBF (NUSTAR.DA grant No.05P 15RDFN1).

References
[1] Demorest P B, Pennucci T, Ransom S M, Roberts M S E and Hessels J W T 2010 Nature 467 1081-3
[2] Brown B A 2000 Phys. Rev. L 85 5296
[3] Marqués F M et al. 2002 Phys. Rev. C 65 044006
[4] Kisamori K et al. 2016 Phys. Rev. L 116 052501
[5] Bertulani C A and Zelevinsky V 2003 J. Phys. G 29 2431
[6] Timofeyuk N K 2003 J. Phys. G 29 L9
[7] Sofianos S A, Rakityansky S A and Vermaak G P 1997 J. Phys. G 23 1619
[8] Lazauskas R and Carbonell J 2005 Phys. Rev. C 72 034003
[9] Hiyama E, Lazauskas R, Carbonell J and Kamimura M 2016 Phys. Rev. C 93 044004
[10] Grigorenko L V, Timofeyuk N K and Zhukov M V 2004 Eur. Phys. J. A 19 187
[11] Yu. A. Lashko and G. F. Filipppov 2008 Phys. At. Nucl 71 209
[12] Pieper S C 2003 Phys. Rev. L 90 252501
[13] Shirokov A M et al. 2016 Phys. Rev. L 117 182502
[14] Kusada K et al. 2004 IEEE Trans. Appl. Supercond 14 310
[15] Obertelli A et al. 2014 Eur. Phys. J. A 50 8
[16] Takeuchi S et al. 2014 Nucl. Instrum. Methods A 763 596
[17] Kobayashi T et al. 2013 Nucl. Instrum. Methods B 317 294-304
[18] Cao Z X et al. 2012 Phys. Lett. B 707 46-51
[19] Markenroth K et al. 2001 Nuclear Physics A 679 462–80
[20] Simon H et al. 1999 Phys. Rev. L 83 496-9
[21] Chulkov L V et al. 1997 Phys. Rev. L 79 201
[22] Nakamura T and Kondo Y 2016 Nucl. Instrum. Methods B 376 156-61