

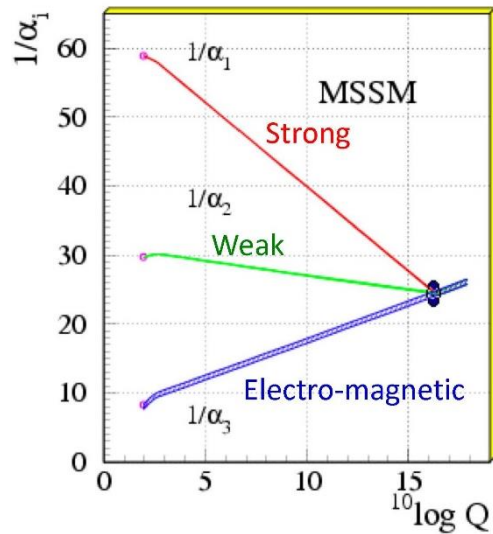
Search for nucleon decay in Super-Kamiokande

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1. Introduction



The Standard Model has been successful!
... but why so many parameters?

GUTs: attempt to unify Strong and Electroweak interactions.

GUTs scale: 10^{14-16} GeV



Cannot be reached by Accelerators.

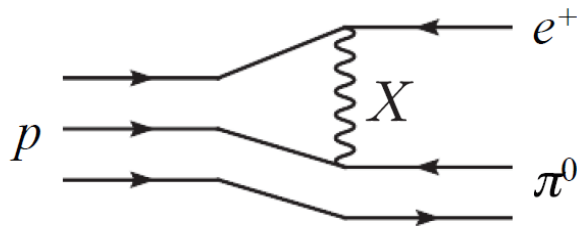
Lepton and baryon numbers are not conserved.



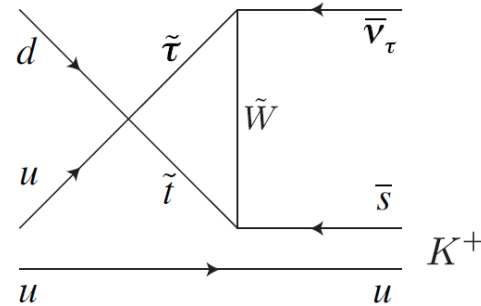
Proton decay is permitted !

Nucleon decay experiment is the direct probe for GUTs.

Examples of proton decay



Minimal SU(5) model



SUSY SU(5) model

Proton lifetime predictions

Model	Mode	Prediction (years)
Minimal SU(5)	$p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$	$10^{28.5} \sim 10^{31.5}$ [1]
Minimal SO(10)	$p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$	$10^{30} \sim 10^{40}$ [2]
Minimal SUSY SU(5)	$p \rightarrow \bar{\nu} K^+$	$\leq 10^{30}$ [3]
SUGRA SU(5)	$p \rightarrow \bar{\nu} K^+$	$10^{32} \sim 10^{34}$ [4]
SUSY SO(10)	$p \rightarrow \bar{\nu} K^+$	$10^{32} \sim 10^{34}$ [5]

- [1] P. Langacker, Phys. Reports 72, 185 (1981)
- [2] D.G. Lee, M.K. Parida, and M. Rani, Phys. Rev. D51, 229 (1995)
- [3] H. Murayama and A. Pierce, Phys. Rev. D65, 55009 (2002)
- [4] T. Goto and T. Nihei, Phys. Rev. D59, 115009 (1999)
- [5] V. Lucas and S. Ruby, Phys. Rev. D55, 6986 (1997)

> 10³⁰ years !
Need huge detector .

2. How to find proton decay

- Watch a proton for very long time ($> 10^{30}$ years).
 - Age of the universe: $\sim 10^{10}$ years
 - Obviously impossible.

OR

- Watch many protons for (relatively) short time.
 - Lifetime τ : $N(t) = N(t=0)\exp(-t/\tau)$
 - **Need huge detector !**

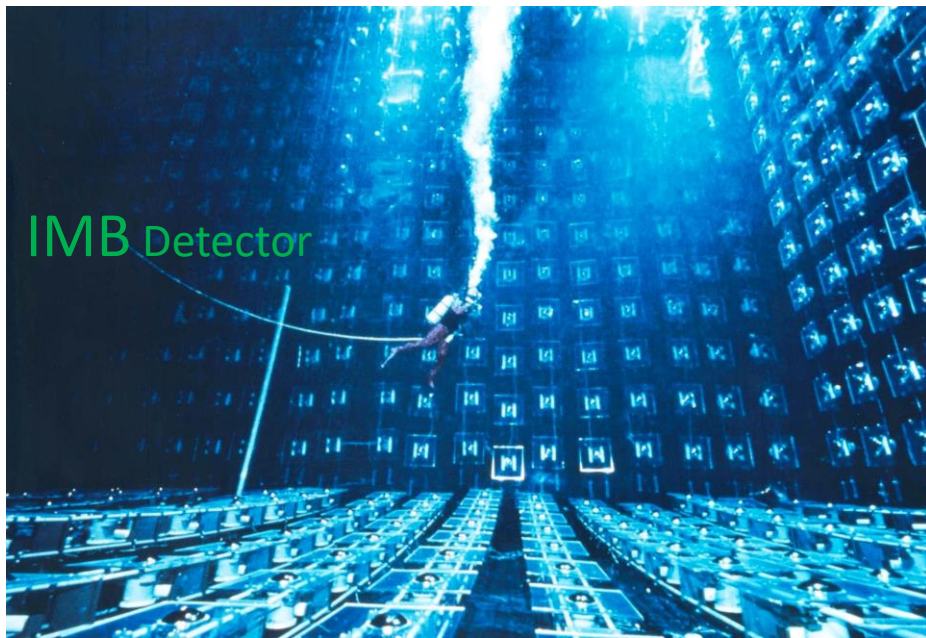
- In the late 1970s, several experiments were proposed for discovery of proton decay.
 - minimal SU(5) prediction: $10^{28} \sim 10^{32}$ years
 - Age of universe: $\sim 1.3 \times 10^{10}$ years
 - It is impossible to continue observation one proton for such long time, but it is equivalent to study large number of proton in short time.
 - 1kt detector expected $10 \sim 10^3$ decays/year.
- Like gold rash, many large detectors were build.
- Two types of detector came into fashion (the 1st generation).

Fine-grained iron calorimeter

- Excellent in track reconstruction.
- Cost per ton were expensive.
- KGF (India), Soudan I,II (Minnesota), NUSEX (Italy/France)

Water Cherenkov detector

- Good momentum resolution and PID.
- Cheaper and easier to build larger detectors.
- HPW (Harvard-Purdue-Wisconsin), IMB (Irvine, Michigan, Brookhaven), **Kamiokande**



Results of Water Cherenkov detector

Detector	Period	Mass (ton)	Limit ($e^+\pi^0$, 10^{30} yr)
HPW-I	1983-1984	680	1.0
Kamiokande	1983-1997	1040	260
IMB	1982-1992	3300	540

Results of Iron calorimeter

Detector	Period	Mass (ton)	Limit ($e^+\pi^0$, 10^{30} yr)
NUSEX	1982-1998	110-130	15
Frejus	1984-1988	550	70
Soudan I	1981-1990	16-24	1.3

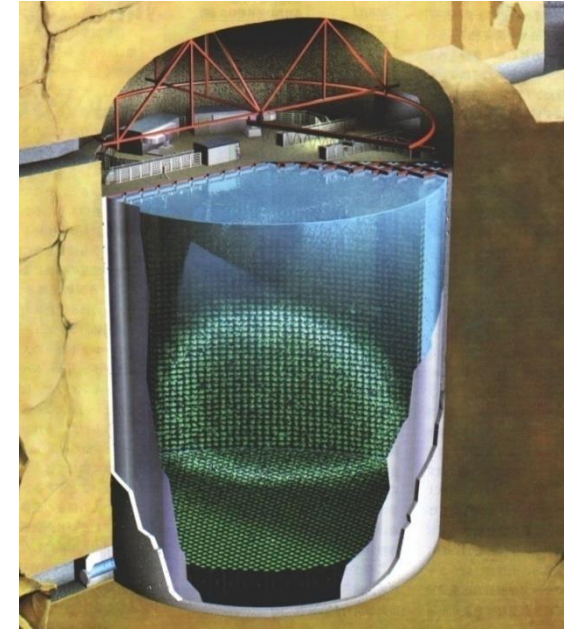


Could not find evidence.
Need more volume !

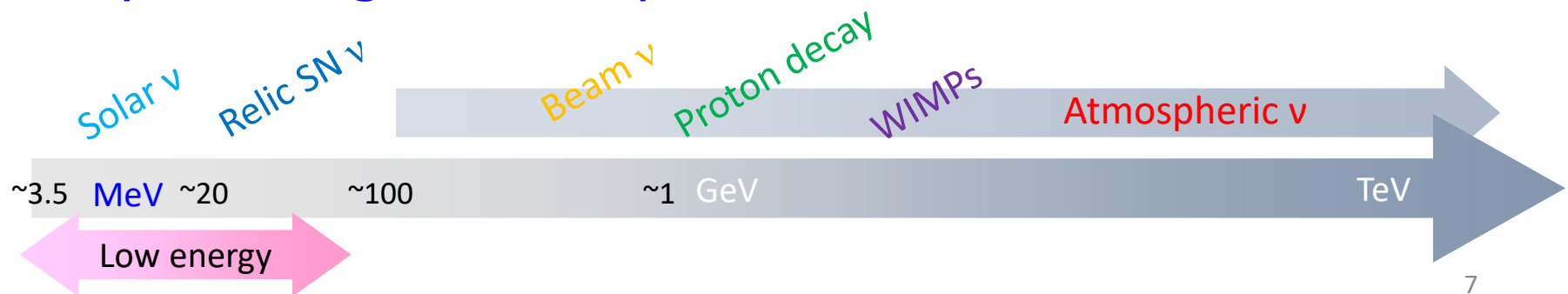
Built Super-Kamiokande !
(2nd generation)

2. History of Super-Kamiokande

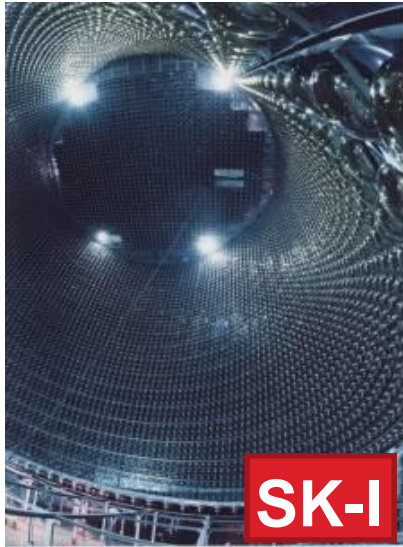
Location: Kamioka mine, Japan. ~1000 m under ground.
Size: 39 m (diameter) x 42 m (height), 50kton water. Optically separated into inner detector (ID) and outer detector (OD, ~2.5 m layer from tank wall.)
Photo device: 20 inch PMT (ID), 8 inch PMT (OD, veto cosmic rays, ~1/3 comes from IMB).
Mom. resolution: 3.0 % for e 1 GeV/c (4.1%: SK-2).
Particle ID: Separate into EM shower type (**e-like**) and muon type (**μ -like**) by Cherenkov ring angle and ring pattern.



Physics targets of Super-Kamiokande

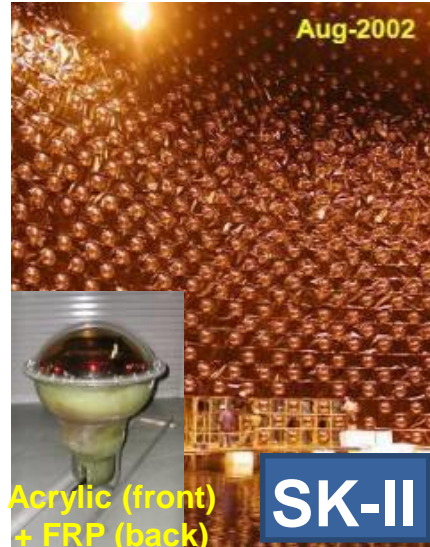


Amazingly, SK still runs stably more than 20 years.



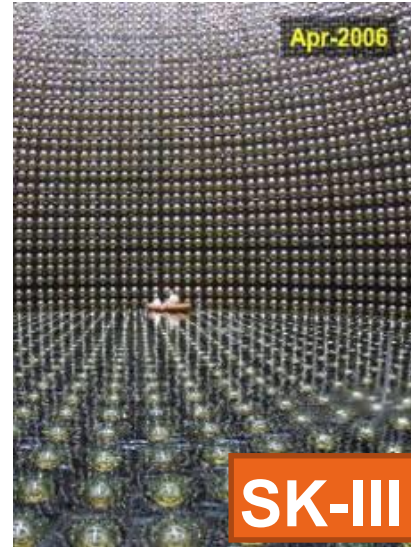
SK-I

11146 ID PMTs
(40% coverage)



SK-II

5182 ID PMTs
(19% coverage)



SK-III

11129 ID PMTs
(40% coverage)



SK-IV

Electronics
Upgrade



SK-I

Found ν
oscillation

Accident

SK-II

Full reconst.

SK-III

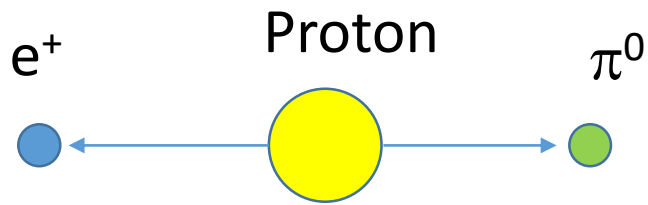
New electronics

SK-IV

Nobel prize

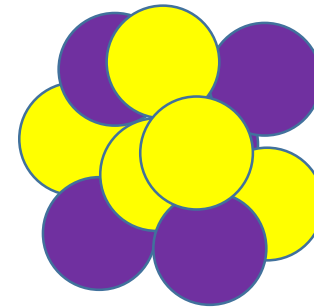
3. $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$ search

What's important for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$?



In "free" proton case, e^+ and π^0 emit in back-to-back. Energy corresponding to proton mass is fully used by decayed particles.

Nucleus

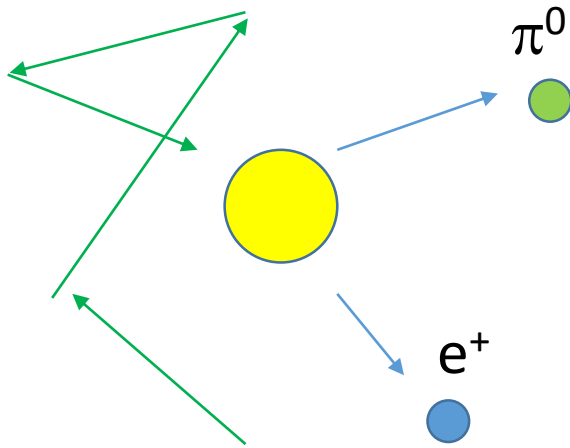


What happens if a bound proton in nucleus decays ?

Inefficiencies and uncertainties of proton decay search come from nuclear effect !

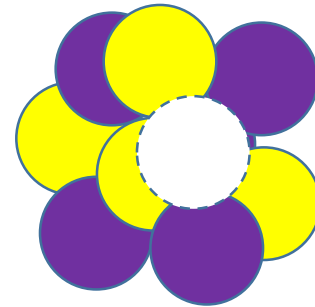
Key 1: Proton never stops in nucleus

- Protons don't exist locally in nucleus. It is always moving in the nuclear potential (Fermi motion, $p_f \sim 225 \text{ MeV}/c$).



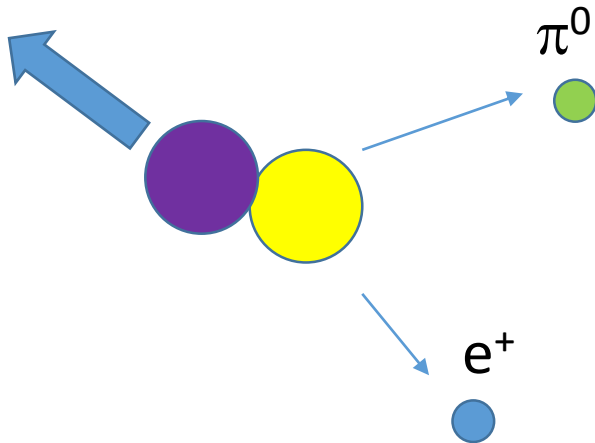
Key 2: Binding energy

- Energy corresponding proton mass should be used for compensating its binding energy (s-state: $\sim 40 \text{ MeV}$, p-state: 15 MeV in Oxygen).



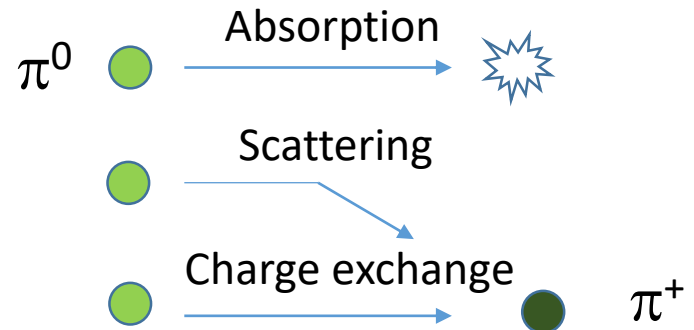
Key 3: Proton strongly binding to other nucleus

- ~ 20% protons are strongly binding to other nucleon which also bring energy when the proton decays (correlated decay)

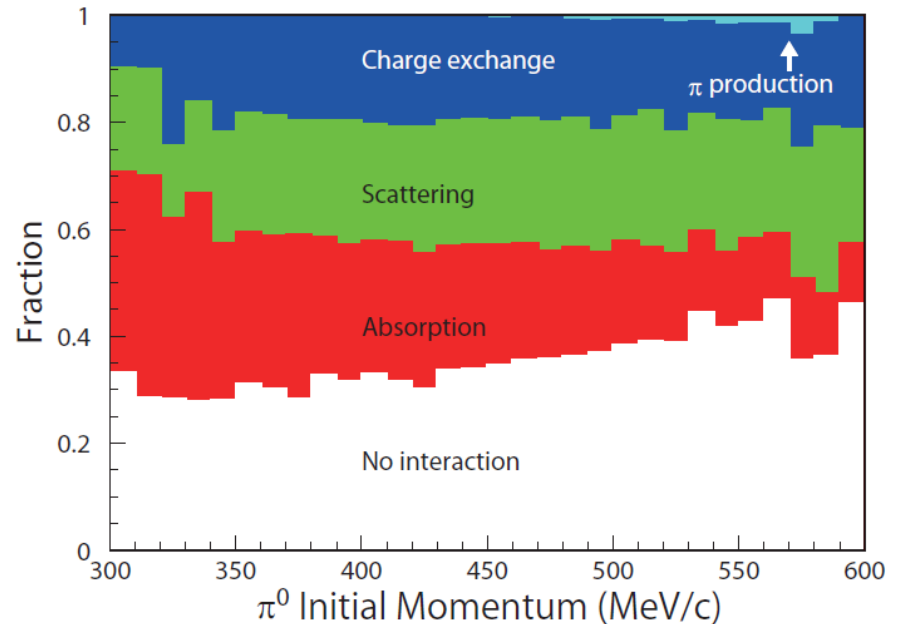
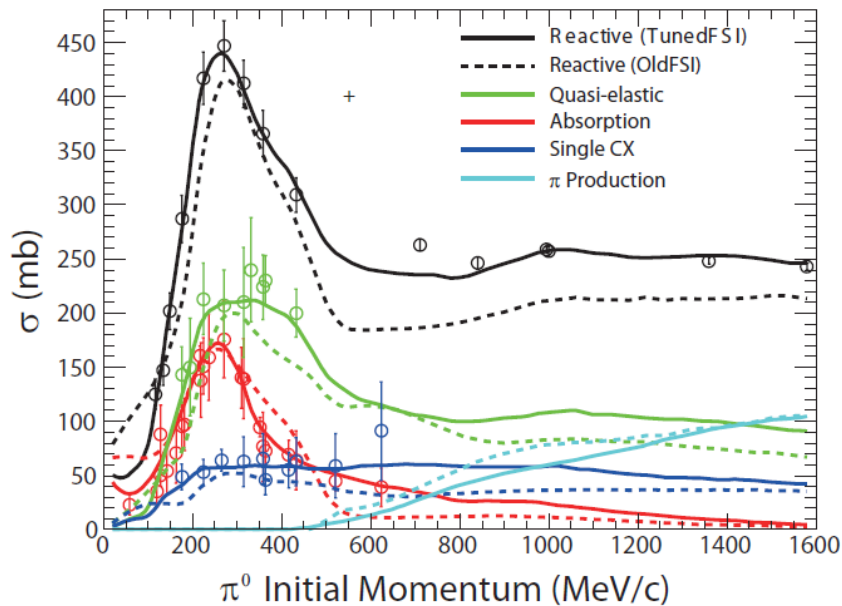


Key 4: π interacts in nucleus

- Mesons (π, K , e.t.c.) in decay products are affected in nuclear interactions before exiting nucleus.



How much pions interact in nucleus ?

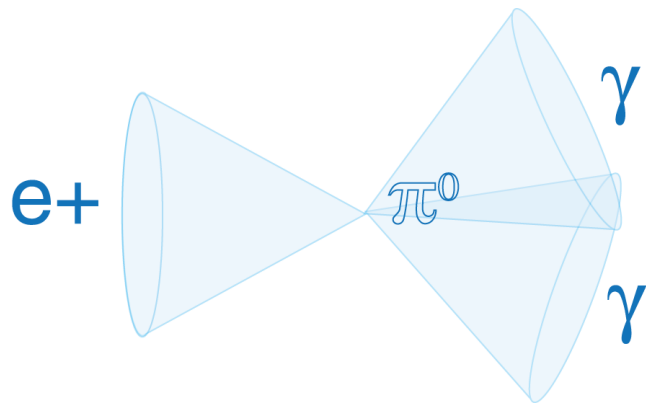


50 – 70 % of π^0 are affected by interaction before going out from Oxygen.

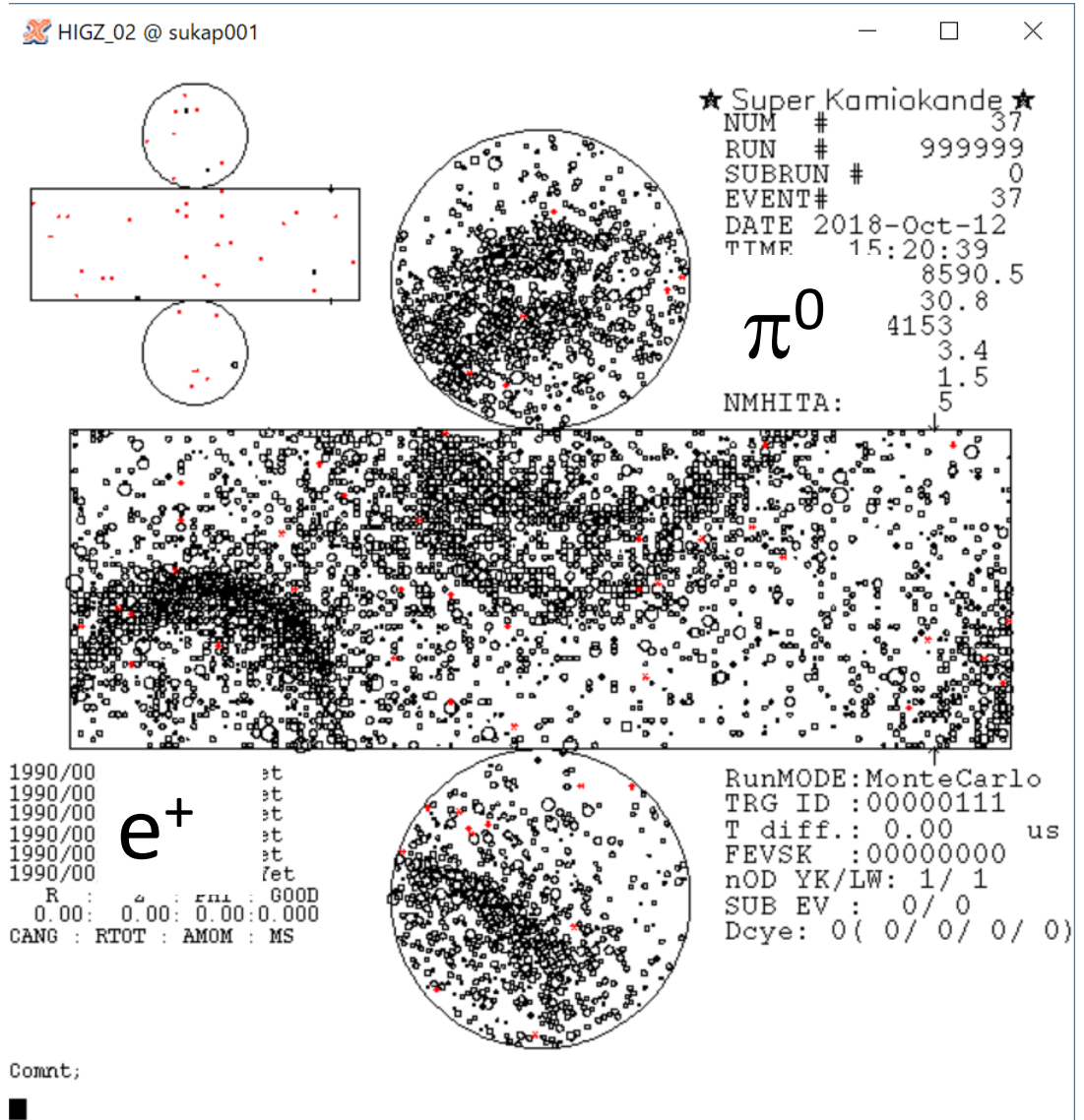
Why water is used for proton decay search ?

- Easy to construct larger detector.
 - Much cheaper than iron or gas.
 - You can find large water tank everywhere (common technology).
- High efficiency and low uncertainty.
 - H₂O has two hydrogens which are not affected by nuclear effect . They are regarded as “free” proton.
 - Free protons contribute high selection efficiency and low uncertainty.

How look like $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$ in SK ?



Three e-like rings should be observed.



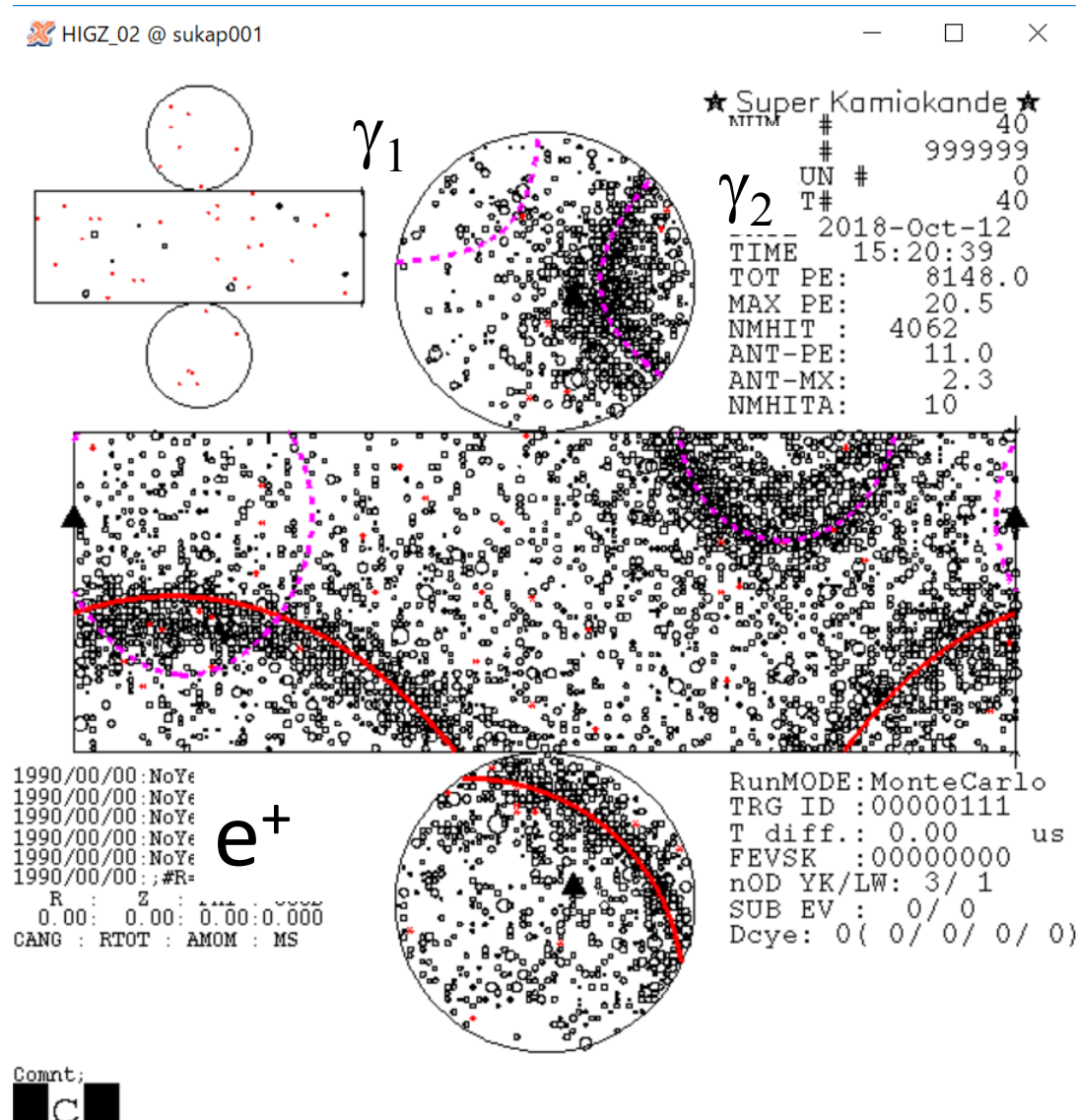
Stopped π^0 case

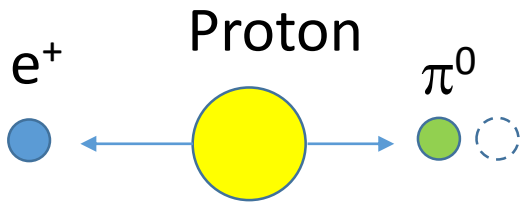
π^0
 $\gamma_1 \rightsquigarrow \bullet \rightsquigarrow \gamma_2$
 $E_1 = E_2$

If a γ is emitted π^0 direction

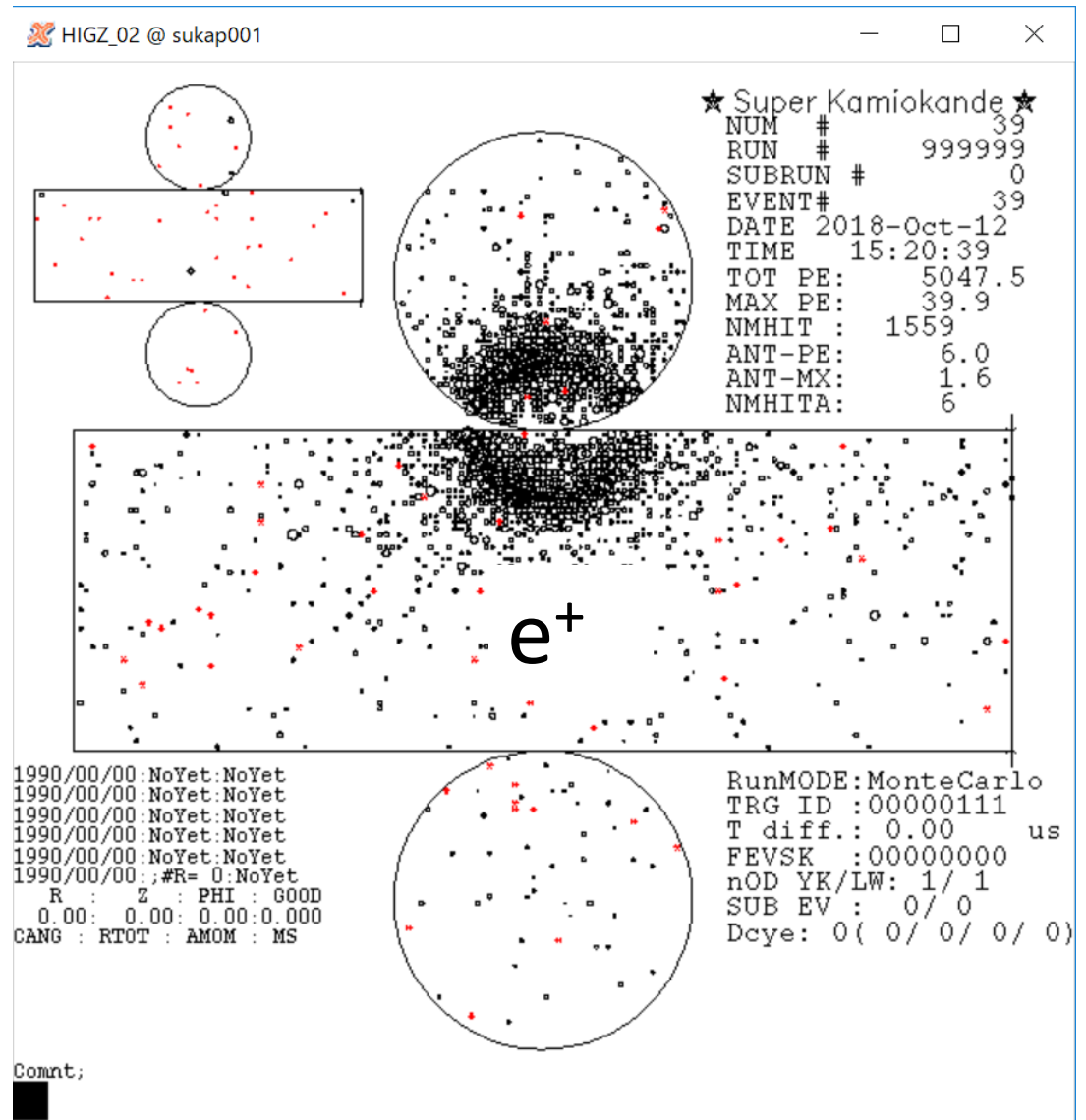
π^0
 $\gamma_1 \rightsquigarrow \bullet \rightarrow \rightsquigarrow \gamma_2$
 $E_1 < E_2$

Sometimes one γ is failed to reconstruct and observed only two rings.

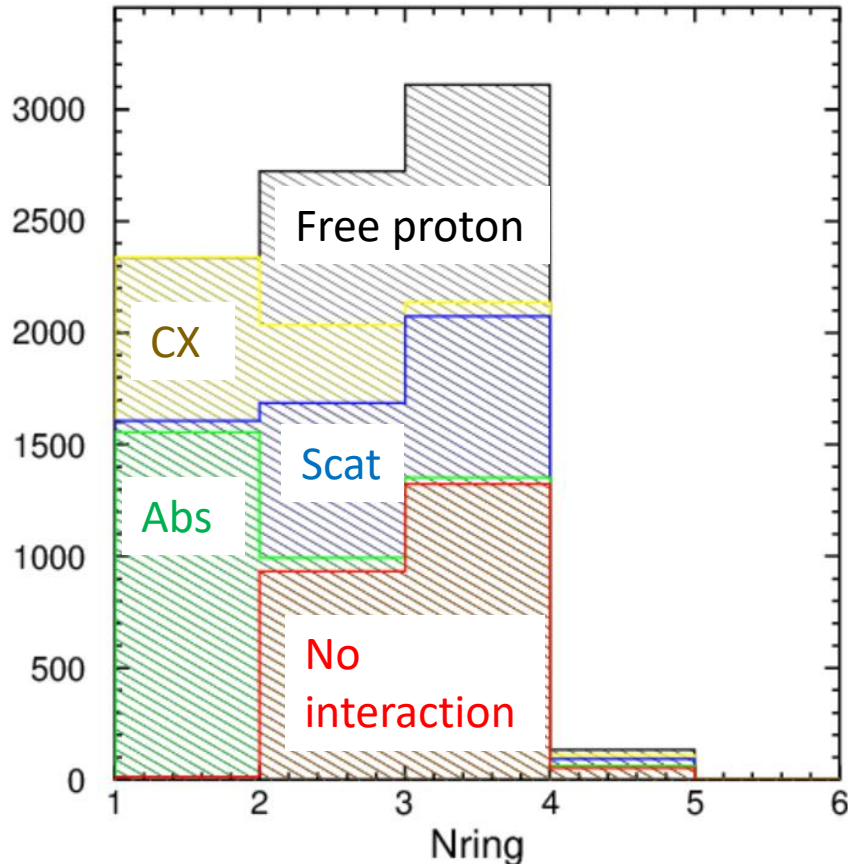




If π^0 is absorbed before exiting nucleus, only e^+ is observed (one ring).



Observed number of ring for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$



Free proton: H in H₂O

No interaction in Nucleus

Abs: π^0 absorption in Nucleus

Scat: scattered

CX: charge exchange

($\pi^0 \rightarrow \pi^\pm$, below threshold)

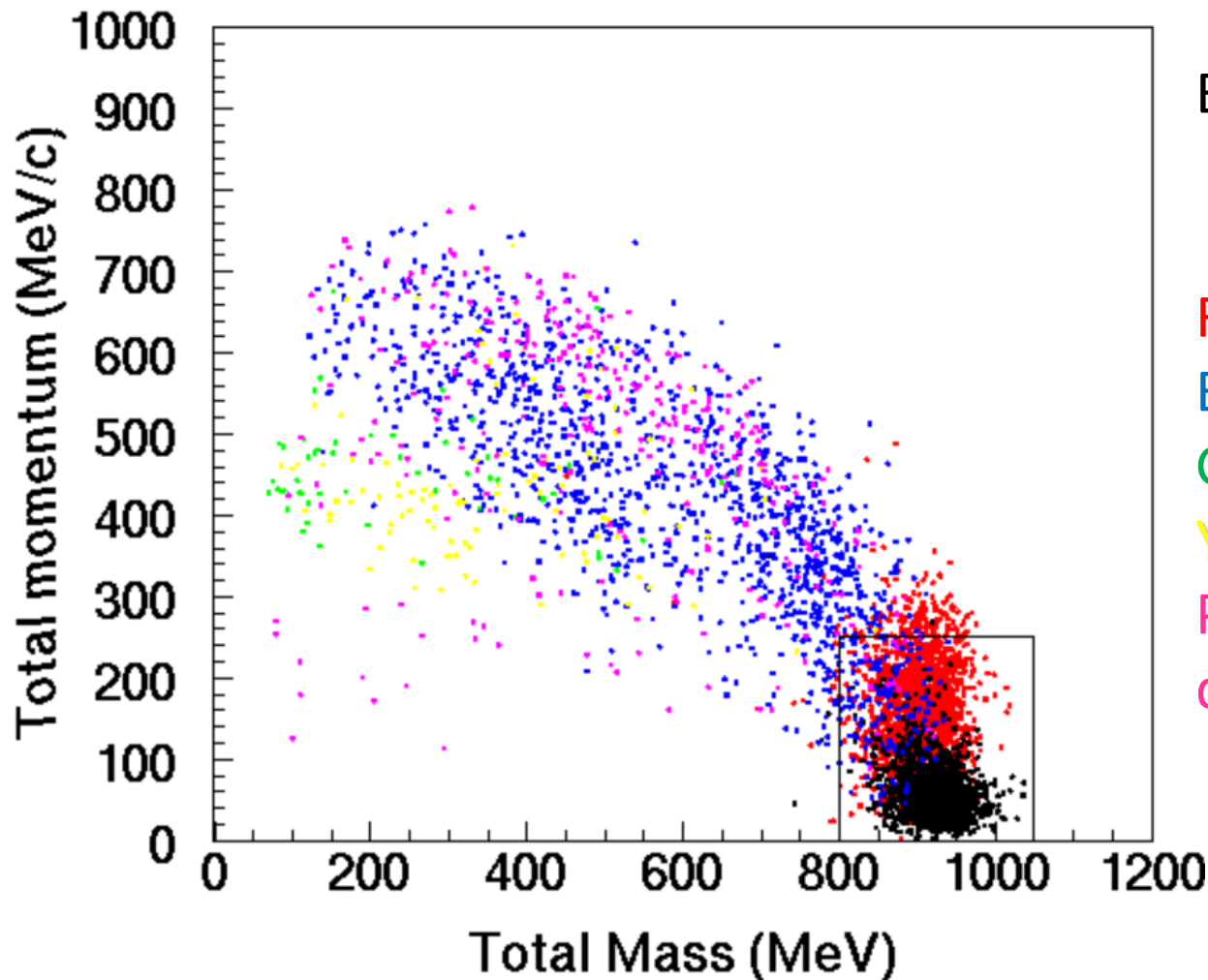
Choose 2 or 3 rings.

Selection criteria for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

1. Event vertex should be located 2 m inward from the tank wall (fiducial volume cut, **22.5kton**).
2. 2 or 3 ring event.
3. All ring should be e-like.
4. No Michel electrons.
5. Reconstruct π^0 mass for 3 ring events. It should be $85 < M_{\pi^0} < 185 \text{ MeV}/c^2$
6. Reconstruct total mass and momentum should be $800 < M_{\text{tot}} < 1050 \text{ MeV}/c^2$, $P_{\text{tot}} < 250 \text{ MeV}/c$.

Total mass vs Total momentum for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

- Selection efficiency $\sim 40\%$
- Inefficiency is dominated by unavoidable physics processes.



Black: Free proton

Brown: Bound proton

Red: No π interaction

Blue: π scatter

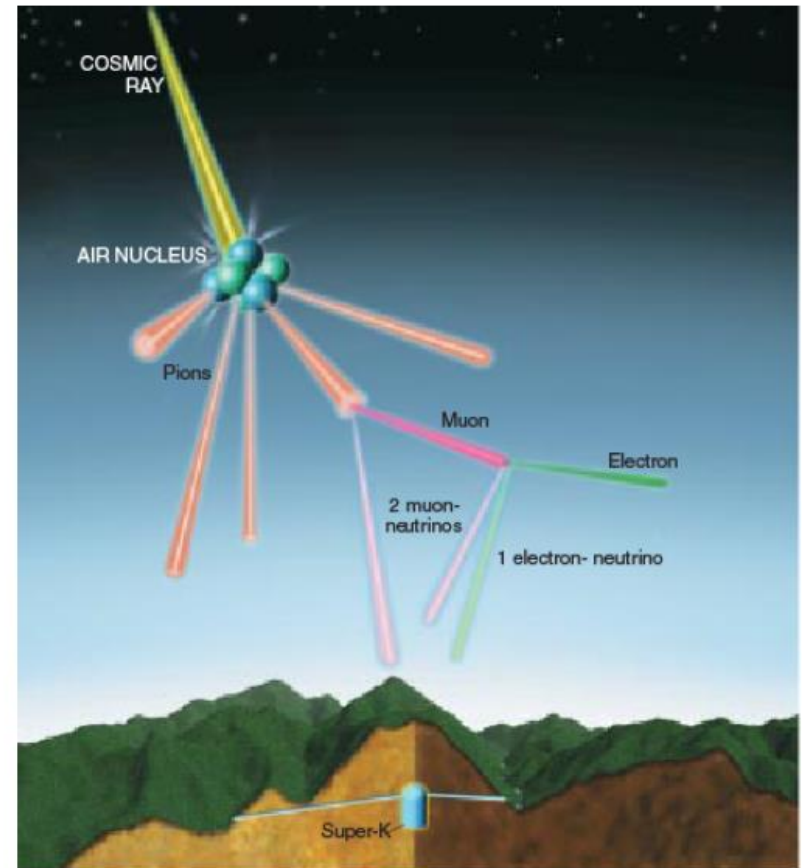
Green: π absorption

Yellow: π CX

Purple: Correlated decay

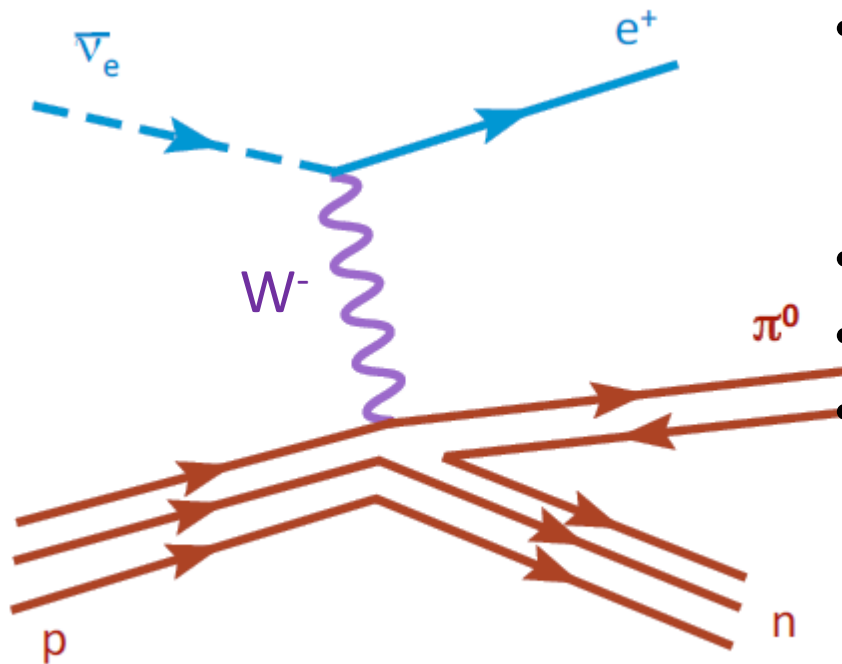
2-2. What's Background events for proton decay searches ?

- **Atmospheric neutrino** is dominant backgrounds for proton decay searches.
 - Visible energy ~ 1 GeV.
 - Solar or SN ν is too low energy.
 - Cosmic ray μ are rejected by outer detector.



Typical background for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

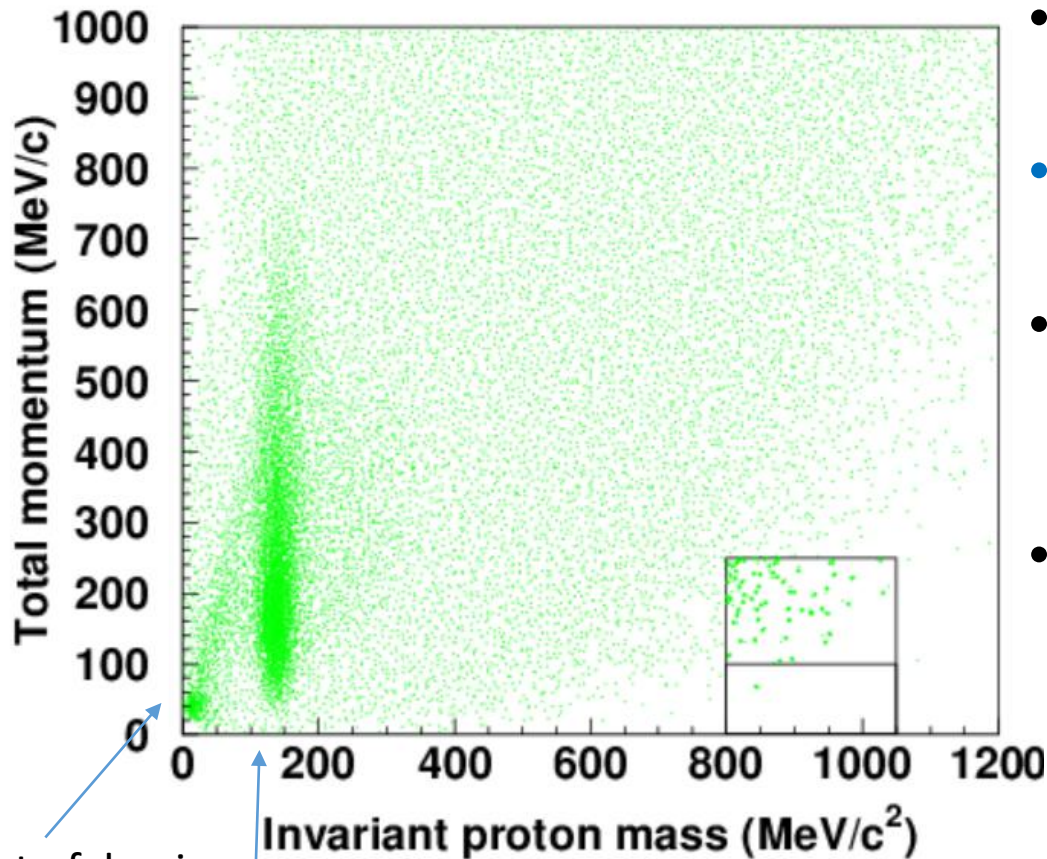
Charged current π^0 production



- Exchange W boson between ν and proton (charged current interaction).
- ν changes to e^+ .
- π^0 and neutron are produced.
- Because neutron doesn't emit Cherenkov light, visible particles after the reaction are same as $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

Total mass vs Total momentum for atmospheric ν background MC

(After all cuts except for total mass and momentum)

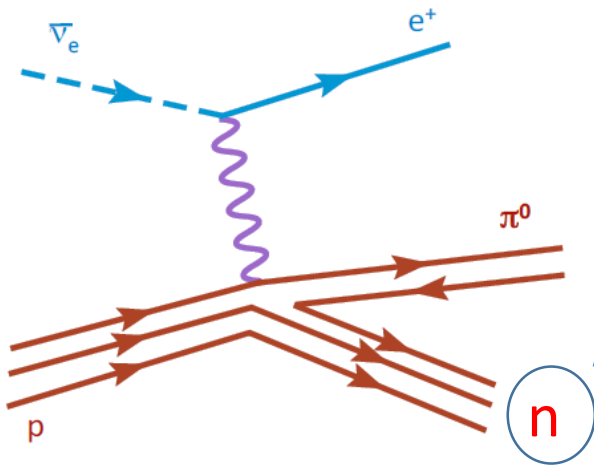


Due to fake ring

π^0 due to $2Re+e$ is allowed.

- Generate huge atm. ν MC, 2000 year of SK!
- Expected BG:
 $\sim 1.3 \text{ ev/Mton*yr}$
- Neutrino events tend to have higher total momentum.
- Almost background free in lower momentum region ($< 100 \text{ MeV/c}$).
 - The region corresponds to free proton decay.

Further background reduction



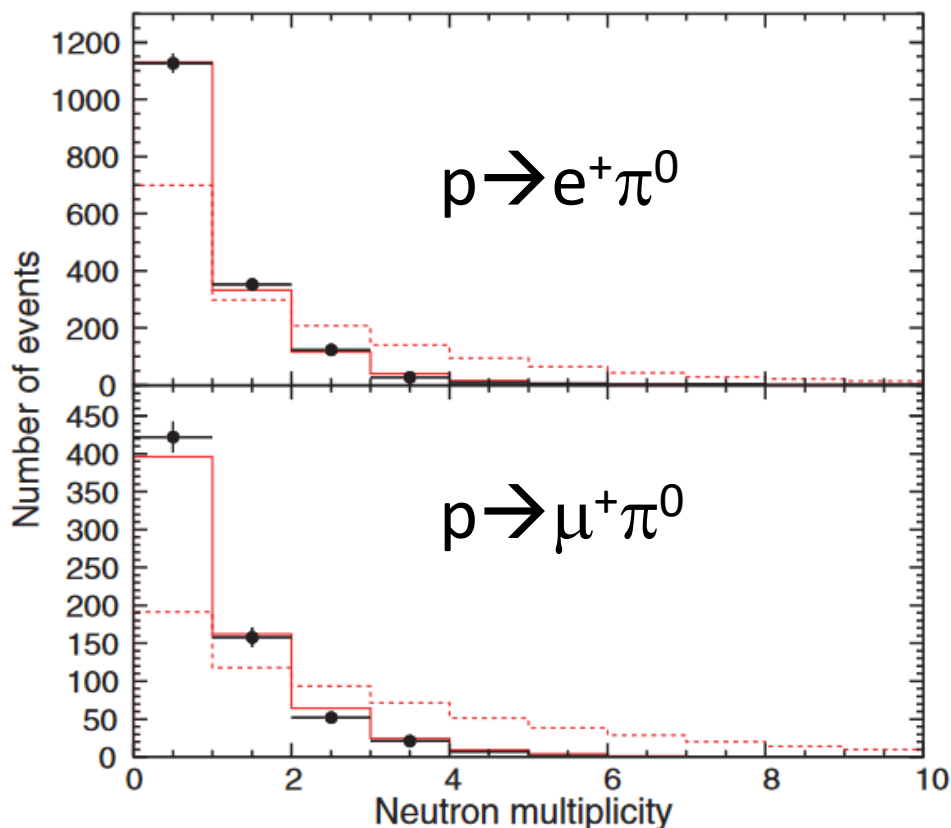
- Neutron doesn't emit Cherenkov light.
- However, neutron is thermalized in water and finally captured by hydrogen ($\sim 200 \mu\text{s}$);
$$n + p \rightarrow d + \gamma$$
 (2.2 MeV)
- If we can detect delayed 2.2 MeV γ ray, we can reduce background more.
- Neutron capture is also important for SN Relic ν and separate ν and $\bar{\nu}$ interactions in atmospheric ν oscillation analysis.

How to find 2.2 MeV γ



- After Time-of-Flight subtraction, search for 7 hits in 10 nsec time window. \rightarrow candidates of γ .
- Make 16 variables related to space and time information of each hits (RMS of phi, theta, hit time, e.t.c.)
- Put them into Neural Network to judge γ or not.
- **Neutron tagging efficiency: 21 % (mis-tagging: 1.8 %)**

How powerful to reject background



- Sample: out of signal box in M_{tot} vs P_{tot} plot.
 - Dot: data,
 - **Histogram: Atm. ν MC**
(solid: reconstructed, dash: true)
- **$\sim 50\%$ background events are rejected** with neutron=0.
- On the other hand, $\sim 7.5\%$ of $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$ are accompanied with neutron from deexcitation of nucleus. Neutron tagging **reduces a few % in selection efficiency.**

Enlarging Fiducial Mass

- Super-K is huge detector but its physics sensitivity is still limited by statistics...

→ Enlarging the fiducial mass.

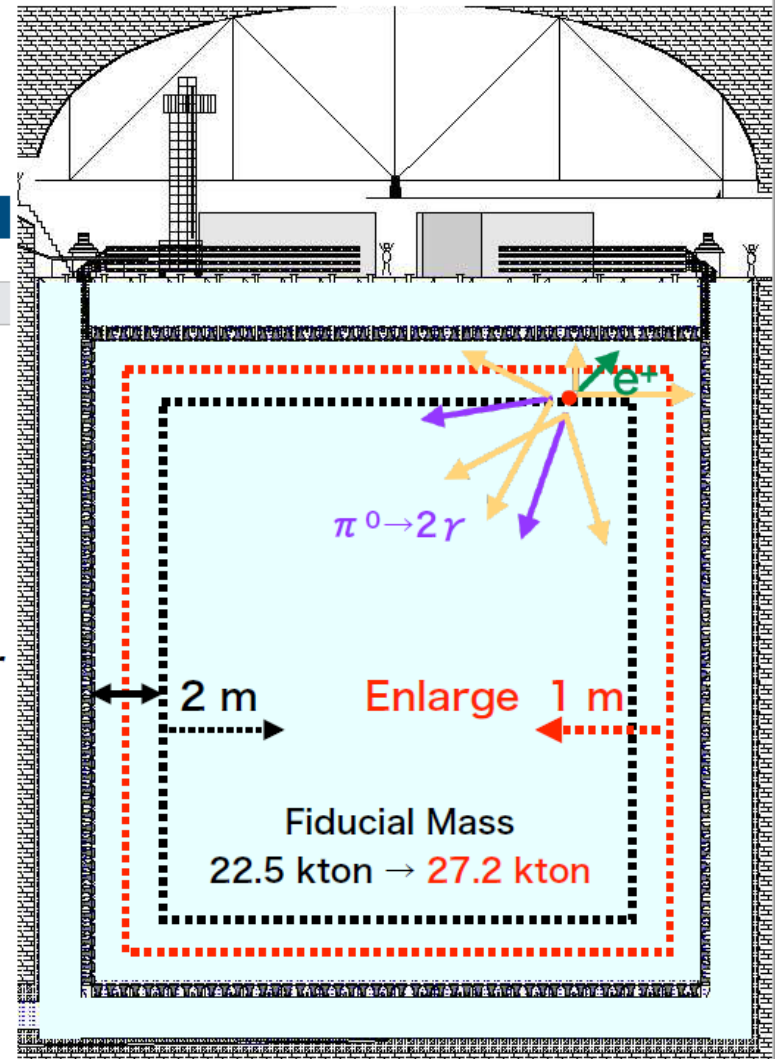
	Conventional	Enlarged
Fiducial Mass	22.5 kton	27.2 kton
Distance to wall	2 m	1 m
Exposure (1996~2018)	372 kton*years	450 kton*years

Remarkable merits

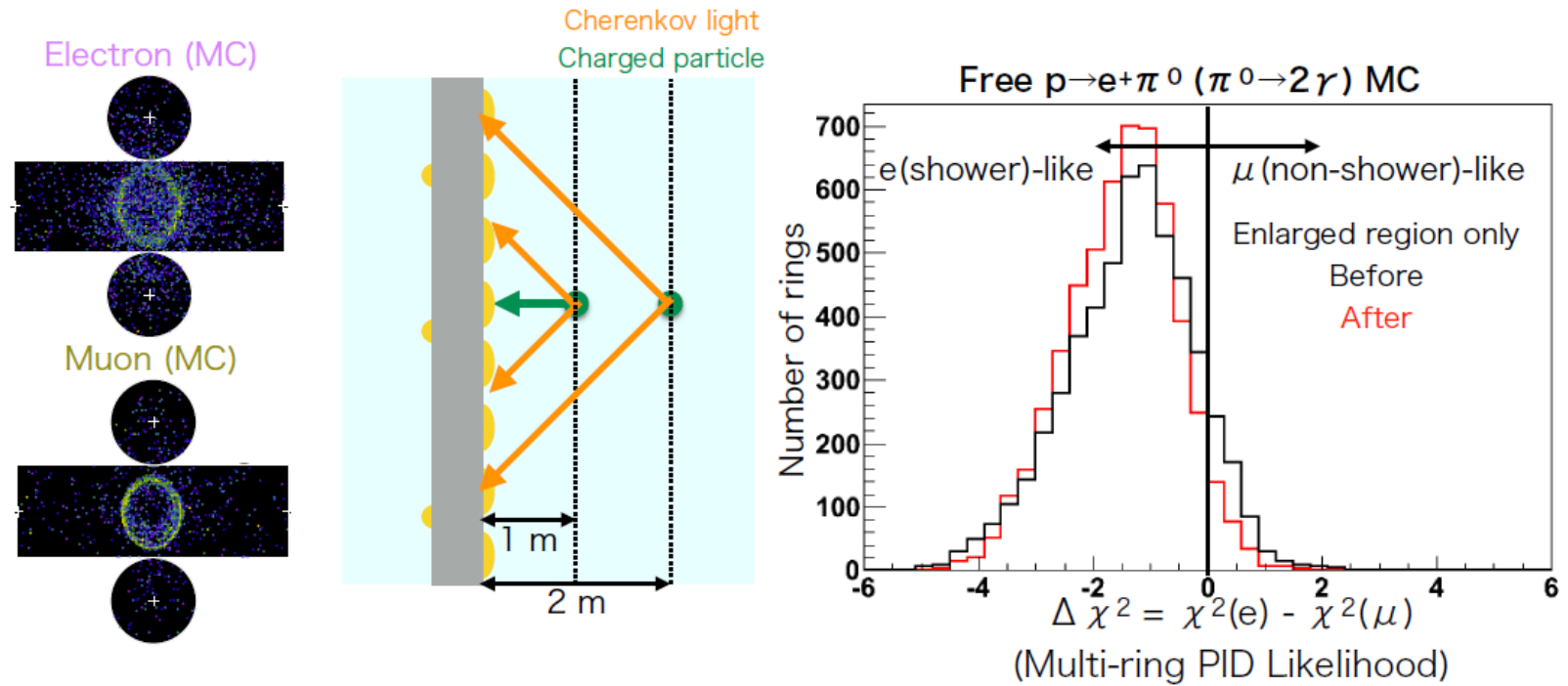
- Enables the use of past data that has never been analyzed.
- Improves **p-decay search sensitivity for every mode.**

Considerations to achieve it

1. **Reconstruction performance.**
2. **External background contamination.**
3. **Data and MC agreement.**



1. Reconstruction Performance - PID Improvement



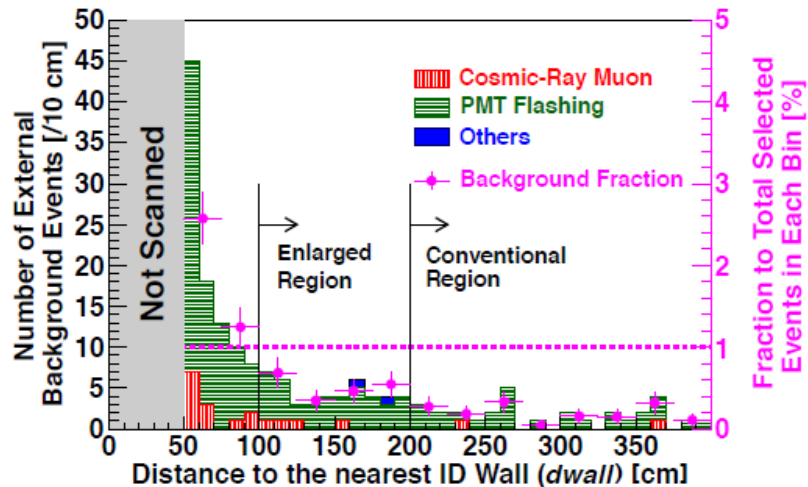
- Main issue in enlarged region: Worse **particle identification performance** due to lower number of PMT hits (unavoidable).

$$\chi^2(e \text{ or } \mu) \propto - \sum_{i \text{ (Hit PMT)}} \log_{10}(\text{Prob}(q_i^{obs}, q_i^{exp}(e \text{ or } \mu)))$$

- In this situation, accurate expected PMT charge (q_i^{exp}) becomes more important. → Revised expected charge table to reproduce real Cherenkov ring image more accurately, reducing biases and **increasing p-decay signal efficiency by ~20%** in enlarged region.

Data and MC Quality

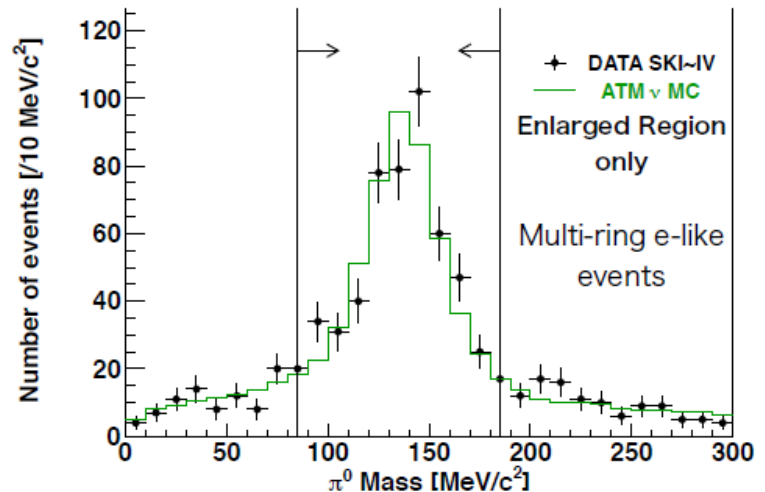
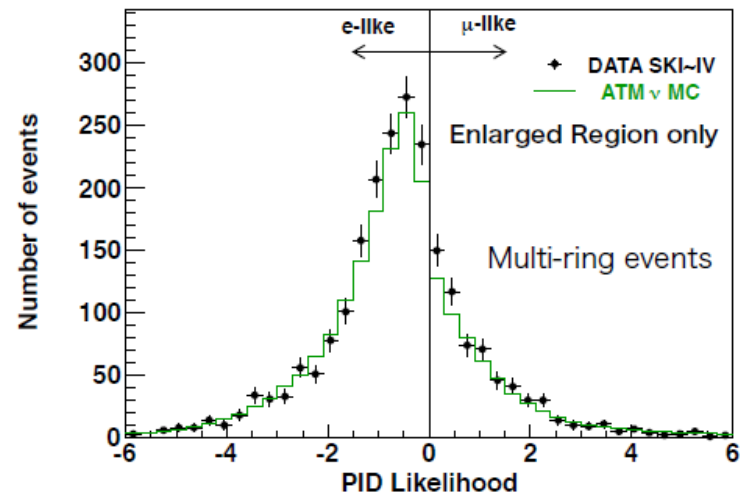
2. External Background Contamination



- Conducted event scanning up to 50 cm to wall to estimate external background contamination.
- Concluded to enlarge fiducial mass region up to 100 cm to wall to keep background contamination rate (N_{BG}/N_{total}) within 1%.
 - Most of the selected events are atmospheric neutrino events.

3. Data and MC agreement.

Demonstration using atmospheric ν



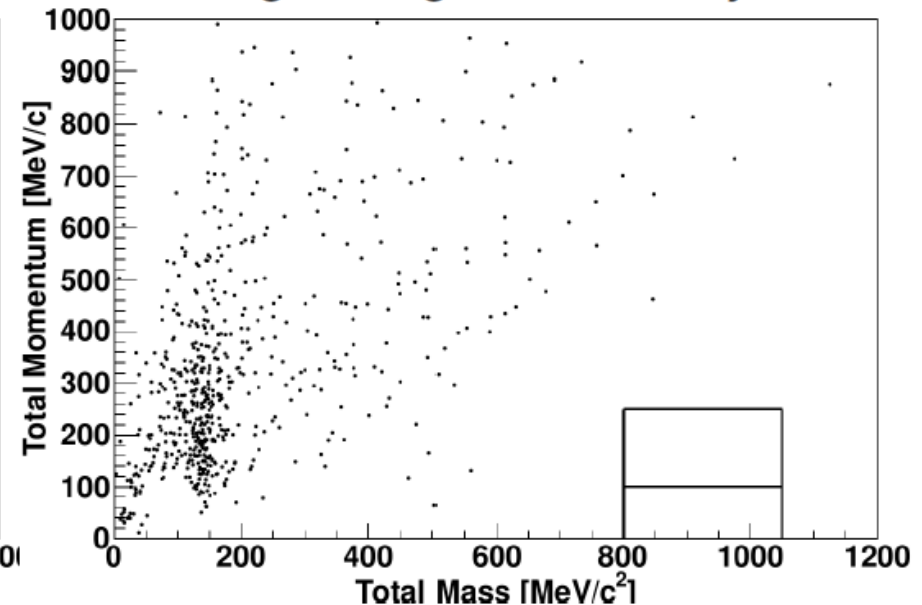
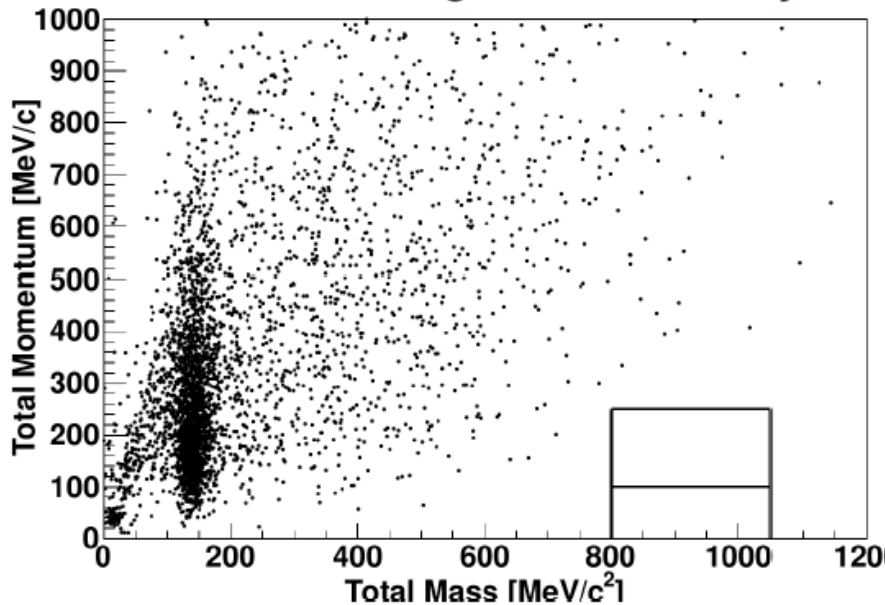
Good Data and MC agreement.

Data Result $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

Data: Super-K Full Livetime, 1996~2018, 450 kton*years.

Conventional Region 372 kton*years

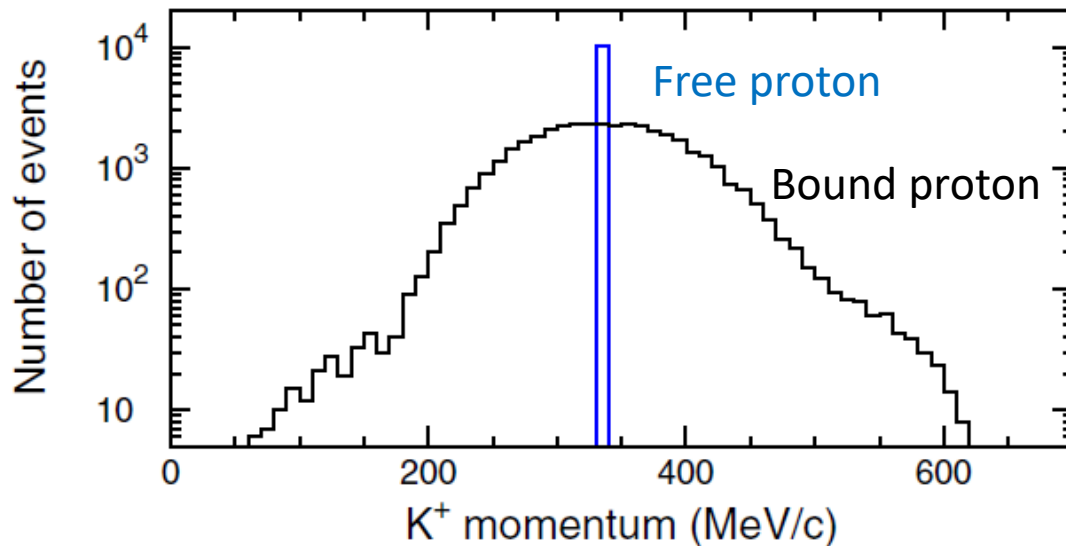
Enlarged Region 78 kton*years



- No candidates in signal box incl. enlarged region.
- Lower lifetime limit @90%C.L.
 - $\tau / B_{p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0} > 2.4 \times 10^{34}$ years (published: 1.6×10^{34} years, 306 kton*years)
- Most stringent constraint. ~1.5 times longer than published.

4. $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$ search

Difficulty of $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$

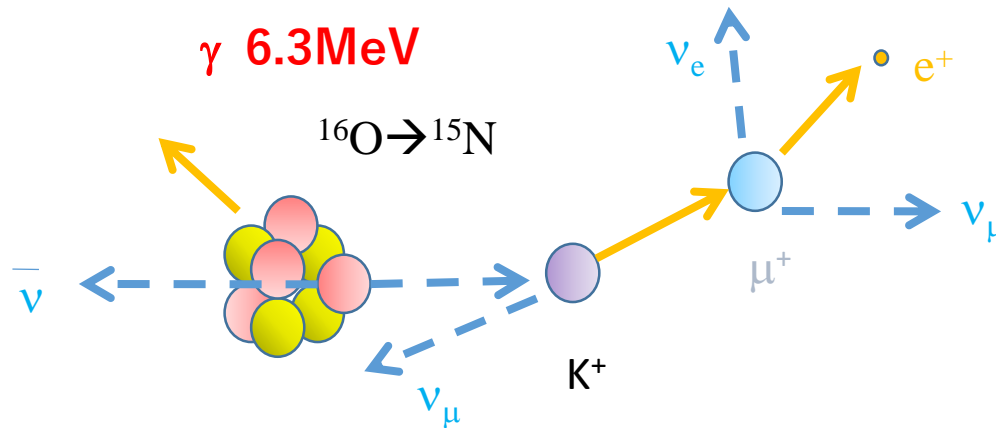


- K^+ mass: 494 MeV, relatively heavy.
- Cherenkov threshold: 560 MeV/c.
- Most of K^+ can not emit Cherenkov light.

4-1 How to find $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$ in Water Cherenkov detector

- K^+ has low momentum, most of them **stop in water** and decay with 12 nsec lifetime.
- Major K^+ decay mode
 - $K^+ \rightarrow \nu\mu^+$: 64 %
 - $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^0$: 21 %
- “Stopping K^+ ” means **two body decay products of K^+ should have monochromatic momentum.**
 - $K^+ \rightarrow \nu\mu^+$: 236 MeV/c
 - $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^0$: 206 MeV/c
- Using this property, Water Cherenkov detector can search for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$.

4-2. Search for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$, $K^+ \rightarrow \nu \mu^+$



- Visible particle is only μ^+ with Michel electron.
- Search for data excess around 236 MeV/c of μ comparing with atmospheric ν MC.
- After proton decay, **40 % of remaining nucleus emits 6 MeV γ for deexcitation.** It is useful to reduce background.

Example of $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$, $K^+ \rightarrow \nu \mu^+$ with γ

Super-Kamiokande IV

Run 999999 Sub 0 Event 69
D_wall: 1165.1 cm
Evis: 53.2 MeV
mu-like, $p = 231.0$ MeV/c

Resid (ns)

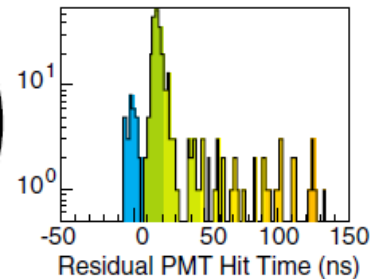
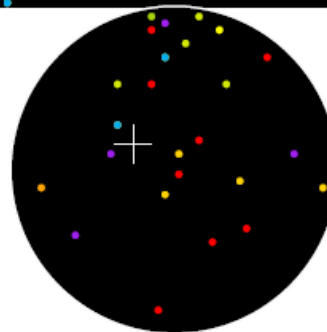
- > 182
- 160- 182
- 137- 160
- 114- 137
- 91- 114
- 68- 91
- 45- 68
- 22- 45
- 0- 22
- -22- 0
- -45- -22
- -68- -45
- -91- -68
- -114- -91
- -137- -114
- <-137

μ

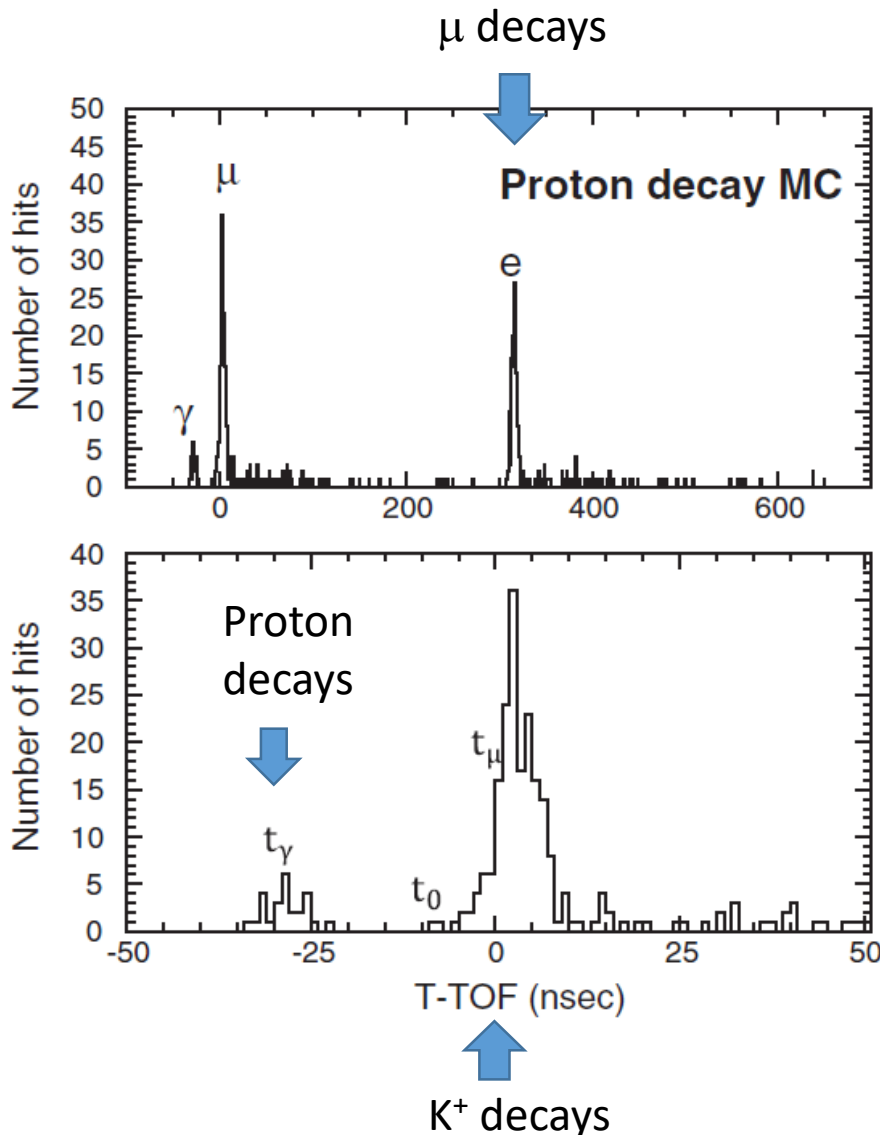
Color of hits corresponds to time.

Cyan corresponds to nuclear γ .

Difficult to identify γ from hit pattern.




Time structure with nuclear γ



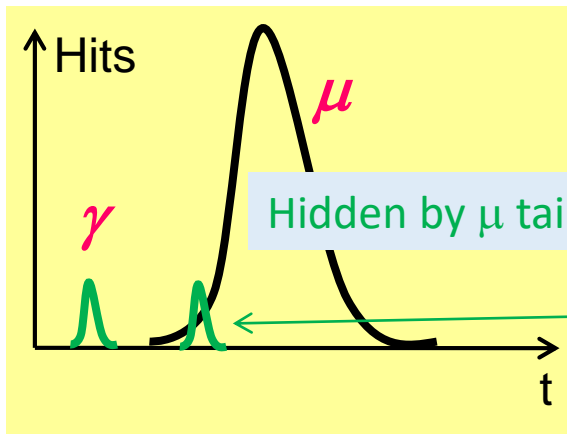
- 3 hit clusters in time should be observed in case of signal.
- The event is triggered by μ hits.
- γ signal is much smaller than μ and easily hidden by tail of μ hits.
- Make 12 nsec time window and slide it toward left from t_0 (end of μ tail) to search for maximum hit cluster.

Selection criteria for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$, $K^+ \rightarrow \nu \mu^+$

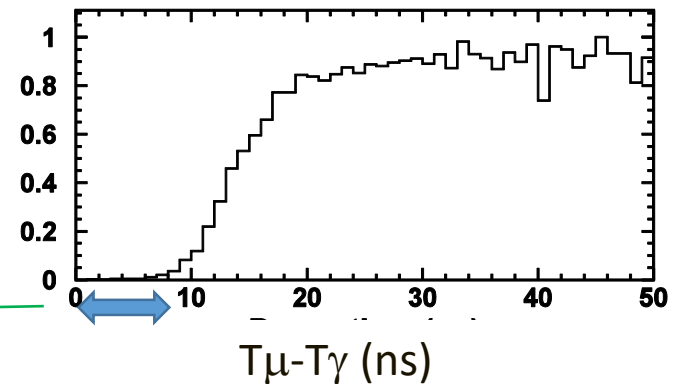
- 1 μ -like ring with Michel electron
- $215 < P_\mu < 260$ MeV/c
- Proton rejection cuts
- Search Max hit cluster  Reduce background by 5×10^{-4} !
by sliding time window (12ns width);
 - $4 < N_\gamma < 30$ hits
 - $T_\mu - T_\gamma < 75$ nsec
- No neutron
- Selection efficiency = (selected events)/(proton decay in fiducial volume):
9 %
 - $\text{Br}(K^+ \rightarrow \nu \mu^+) = 64$ %, only 40 % emits nuclear $\gamma \rightarrow 26$ %
even if detector is perfect.

Remark for this analysis

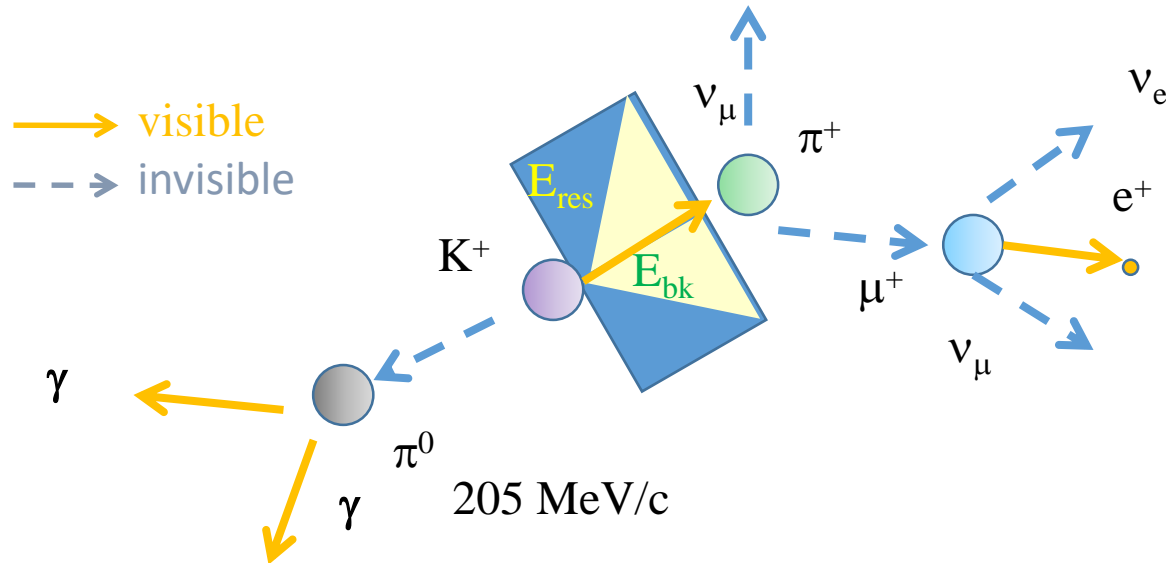
- This analysis is limited by time resolution of PMTs.
 - If γ is close to μ , γ peak is hidden by μ hits.
 - Time resolution of SK PMT is 2.2 nsec at 1 photoelectron.
 - If μ peak becomes sharper, the selection efficiency will be improved.



γ tagging efficiency



4-3. Search for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$, $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0$



- Both π^+ and π^0 has **205 MeV/c** in momentum. This is just above Cherenkov threshold for π^+ , thus it is not identified as a ring in most of case.
- π^+ decays into μ (invisible) and ν , μ decays into $e \nu_e \nu_\mu$.
- π^0 decays into 2 γ s.
- Search for 206 MeV/c π^0 with Michel electron.

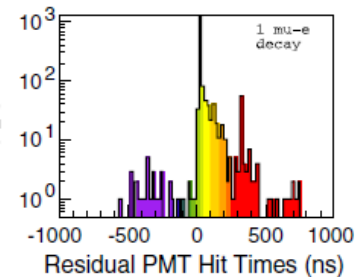
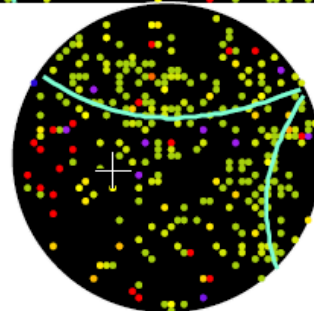
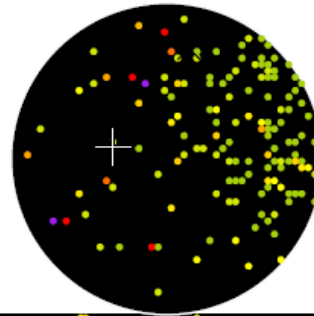
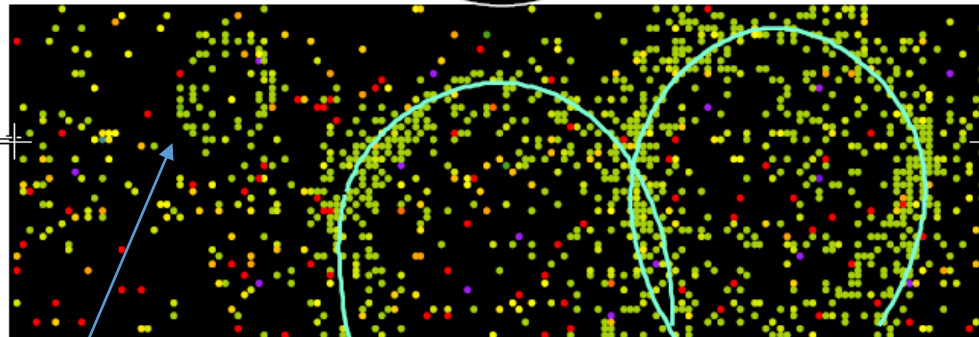
Example of $p \rightarrow \nu K^+, K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0$

Super-Kamiokande IV

Run 999999 Sub 0 Event 236
D_{wall}: 1076.4 cm
E_{vis}: 260.4 MeV
2 e-like rings: mass = 155.2 MeV/c²

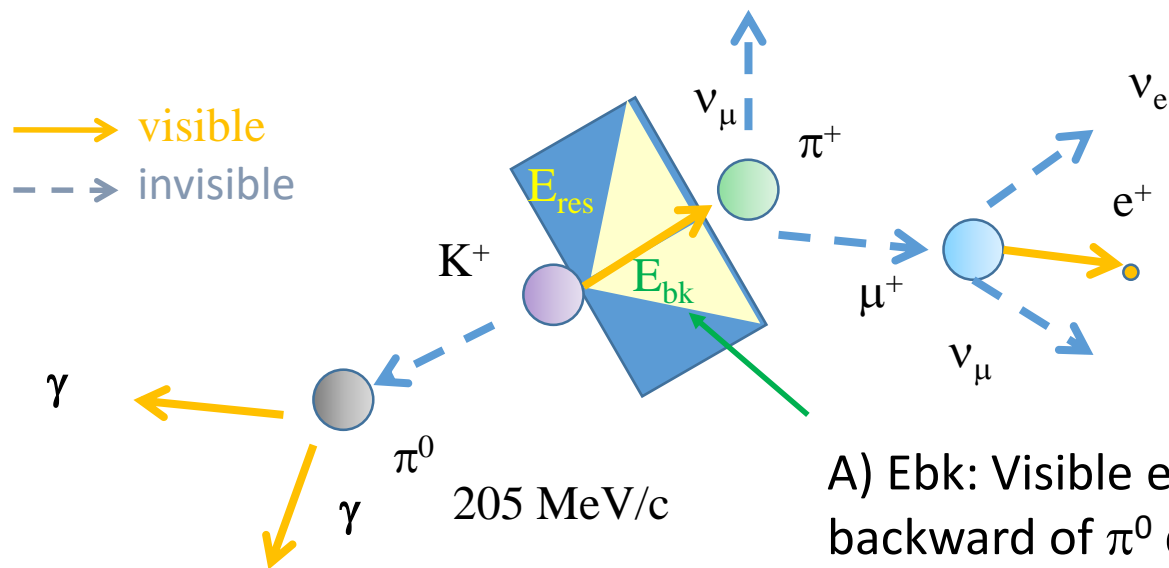
Resid (ns)

- > 251
- 220- 251
- 188- 220
- 157- 188
- 125- 157
- 94- 125
- 62- 94
- 31- 62
- 0- 31
- -31- 0
- -62- -31
- -94- -62
- -125- -94
- -157- -125
- -188- -157
- < -188

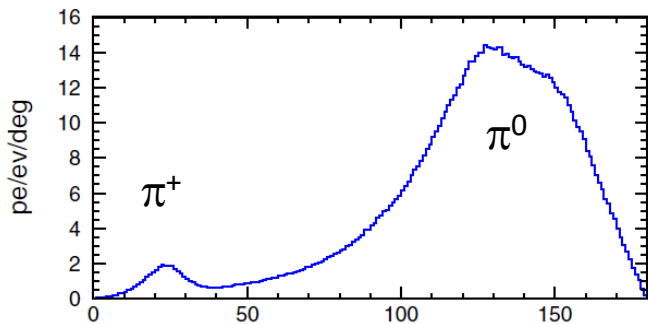


Look like a ring, but fake
ring cut rejects this ring ...

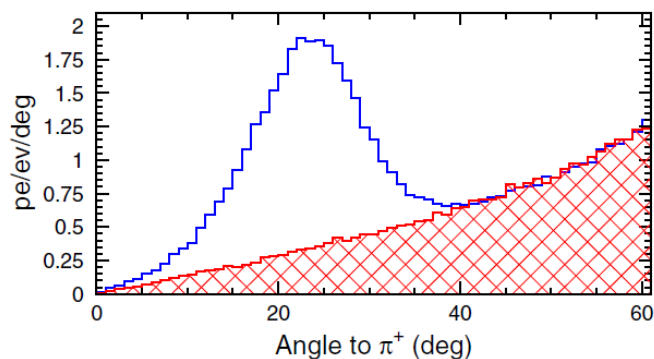
Use π^+ information to select events



Charge distribution



Zoom



π^+ direction

B) Make likelihood for hit pattern.

Selection criteria for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+, K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0$

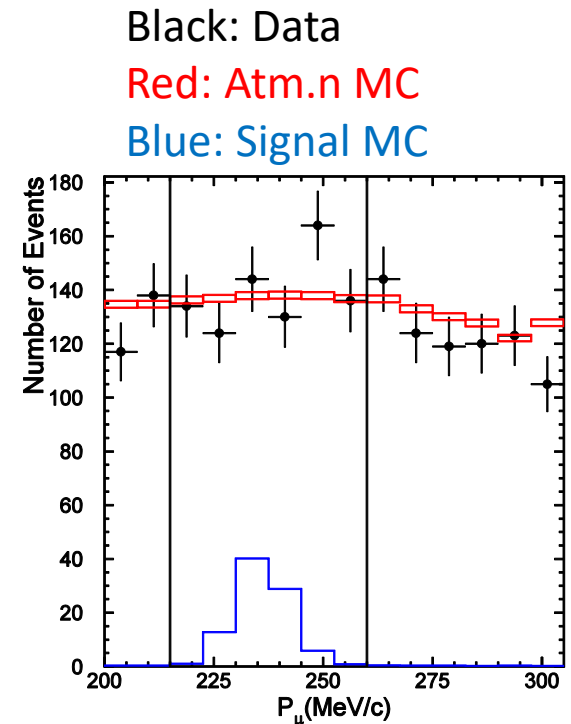
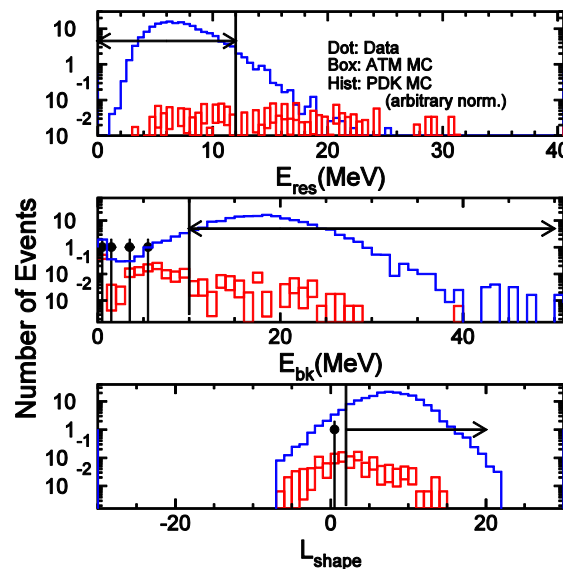
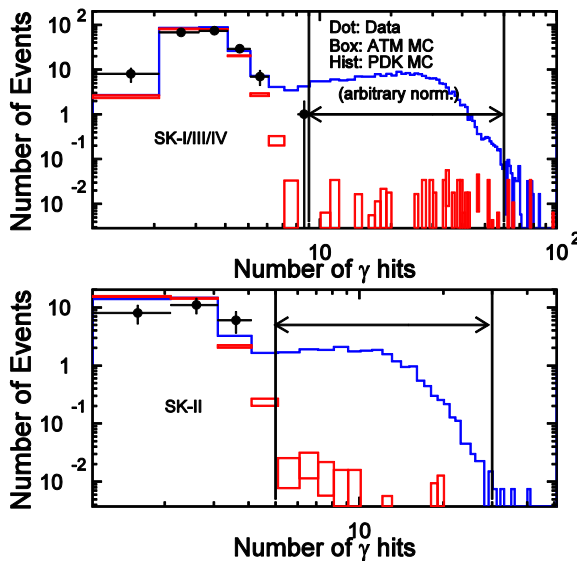
- 1 or 2 e-like rings with decay-e.
- $85 < M_{\pi^0} < 185$ MeV.
- $175 < P_{\pi^0} < 250$ MeV/c.
- E_{bk} : visible energy sum in 140-180 deg. of π^0 dir,
 E_{res} : in 90-140 deg,
 L_{shape} : Likelihood based on charge profile
 - $10 < E_{bk} < 50$ MeV
 - $E_{res} < 12$ MeV (20 MeV for 1ring)
 - $L_{shape} > 2.0$ (3.0 for 1ring)
- No neutrons
- Selection efficiency: 10 % ($Br(K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+ \pi^0) = 21$ %)

Background for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$

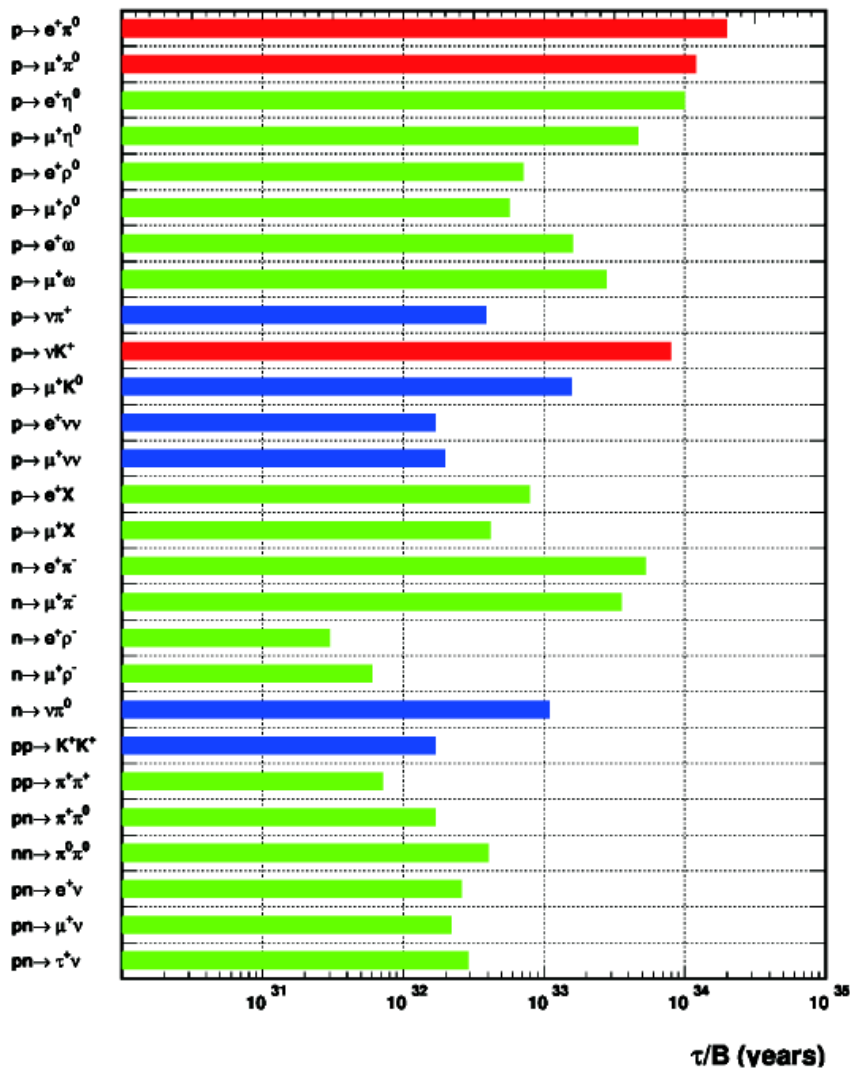
- Dominant background is **K^+ production by neutrino interactions.**
 - $\nu p \rightarrow \nu \Lambda K^+$, $\Lambda \rightarrow p \pi^-$ (BR:64 %, mostly invisible in WCD)
 - Emit nuclear γ as same as the signal.
- It is also rare interaction and we had poor information from very old bubble chamber. Large uncertainty.
- Recently MINERvA measures K^+ production. It is very useful information for this analysis.

4-4. SK results (So far)

- Exposure: 365 kton · year
- Expected background: 0.3 events for $K^+ \rightarrow \nu\mu$ with nuclear γ , 0.6 events for $K^+ \rightarrow \pi^+\pi^0$.
- No candidates observed and no excess in momentum distribution.
- Lower lifetime limit: $> 0.8 \times 10^{34}$ year



5. Summary of SK results



- Most of modes have been investigated with > 0.3 Mton \cdot year exposure (red and green in the left figure).
- Super-Kamiokande can cover large number of decay modes.
- Many of them are the most stringent limits on nucleon lifetime.
- We observed some candidates, but still consistent with expected backgrounds and **no evidence of nucleon decay has been observed.**

Future prospects

- Still no evidence has been found. Major decay modes are explored up to around 10^{34} years.
- Proton lives longer, $\sim 10^{35}$ years ?
 - Run SK 10 times more (~ 200 years)? → Impossible.
- **Absolutely, we need larger detector !**

5. Hyper-Kamiokande project



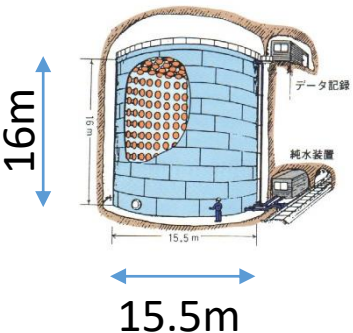
Neutrino oscillation



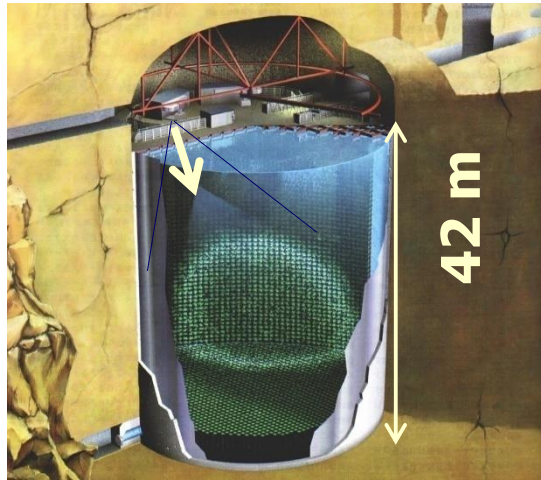
Proton decay ?



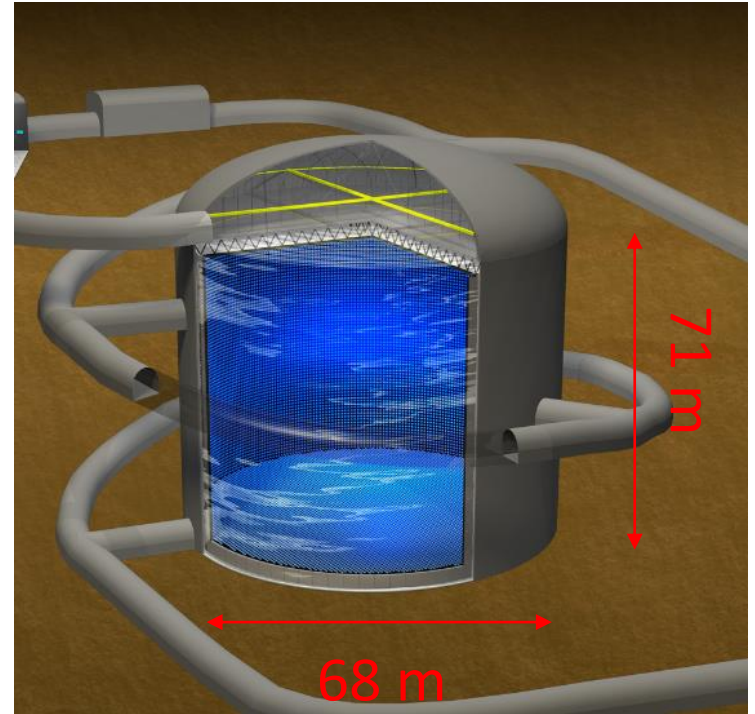
SN Neutrino



Kamiokande
3kton



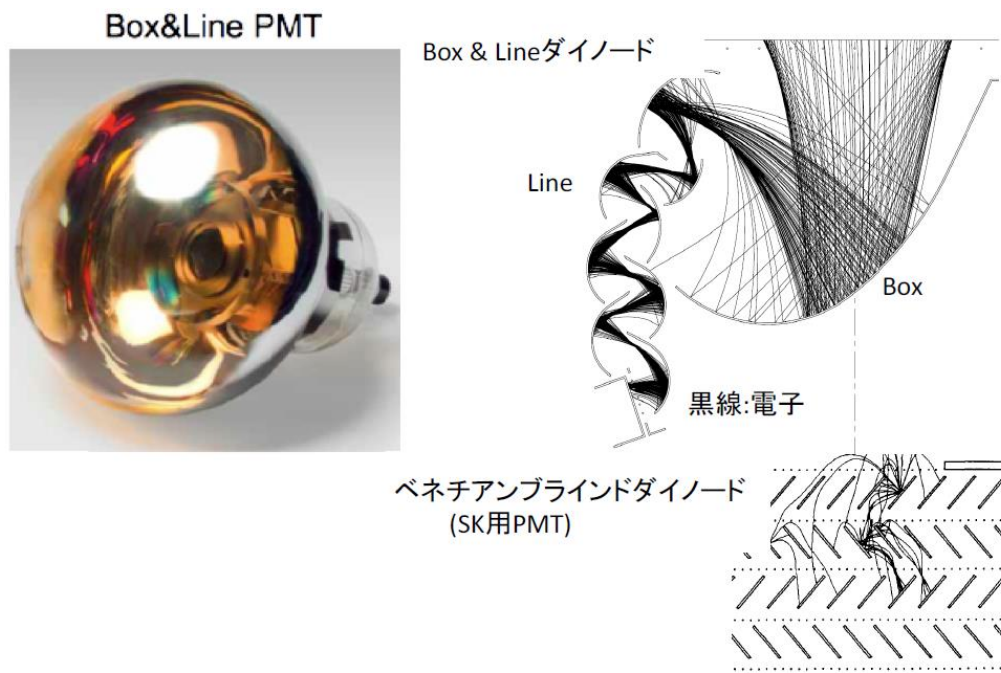
Super-Kamiokande
50kton



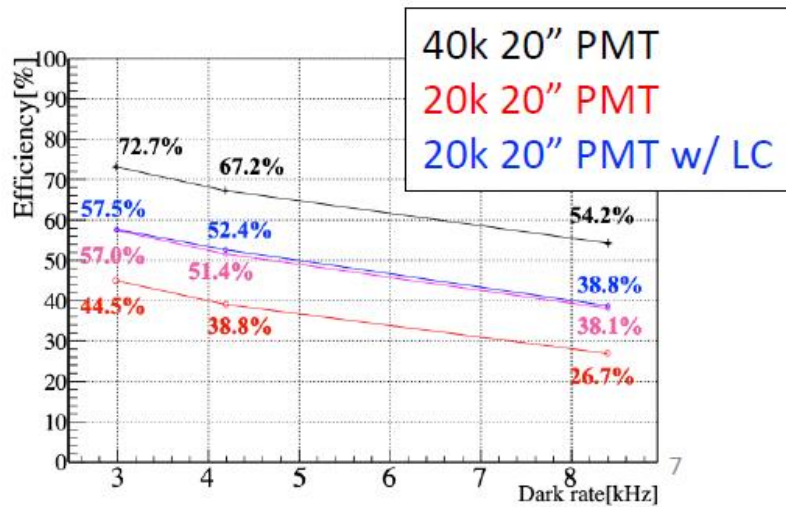
Hyper-Kamiokande
260kton

Enhance proton decay search with HK

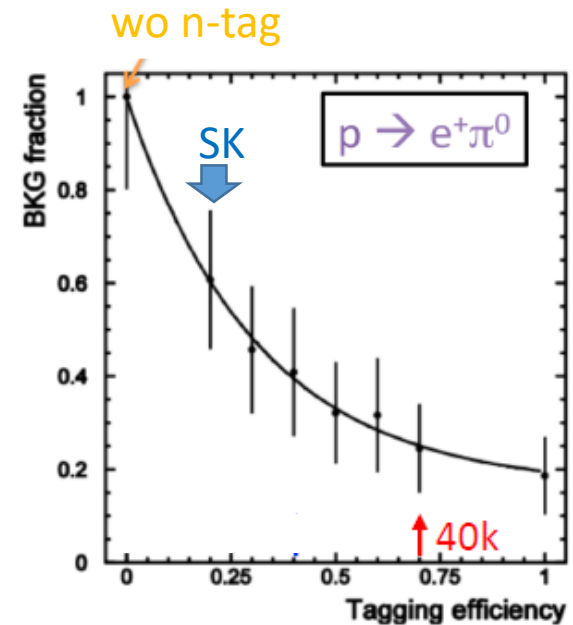
- Fiducial volume: 22.5kton (SK) → 190kton (HK)
- New photo sensor: Box&Line PMT
 - 2 times better photon counting performance
 - a half time resolution



Better photon counting contributes neutron tagging

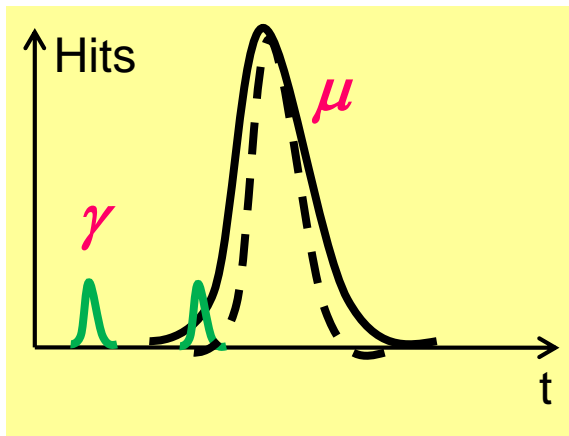


- **Neutron tagging efficiency** study with several detector set up.
- Efficiency depends on dark rate.
- Achieve **~ 70%** in the current baseline design (black) with **~ 4kHz** dark rate.



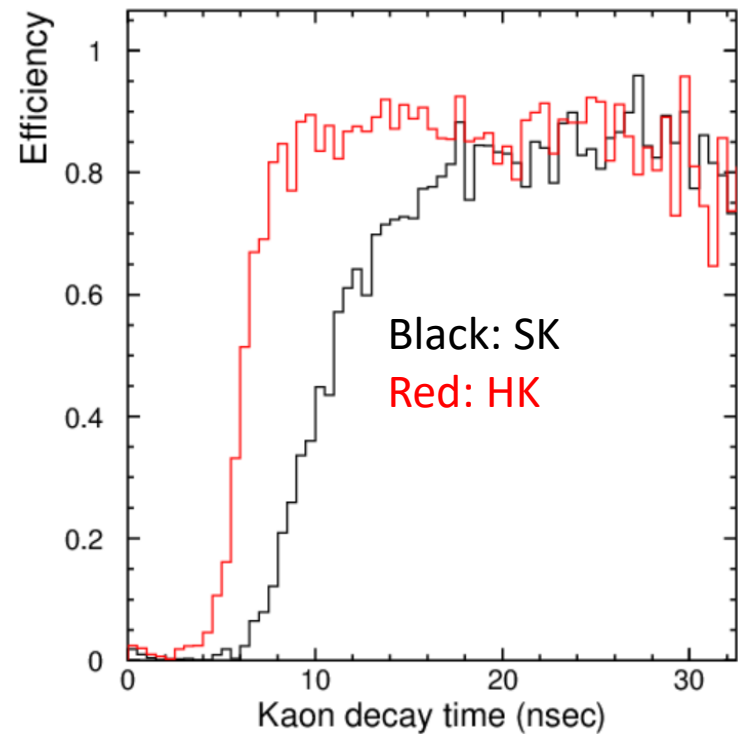
- $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$ background reduction vs. Neutron tagging efficiency
- **Background of HK becomes a half of SK !**

Faster PMT response improves nuclear γ tagging in $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$



- Time resolution: 2.2nsec (SK)
→ 1.1 nsec (HK).
- Sharper time distribution of μ
→ γ close to μ can be identified !

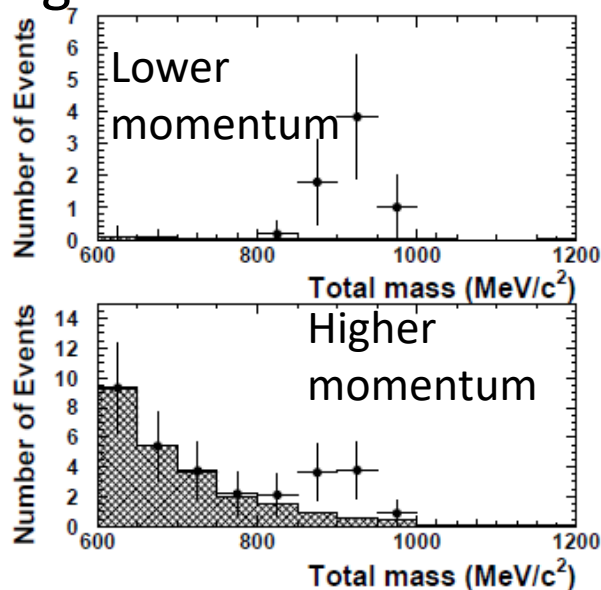
γ tagging efficiency



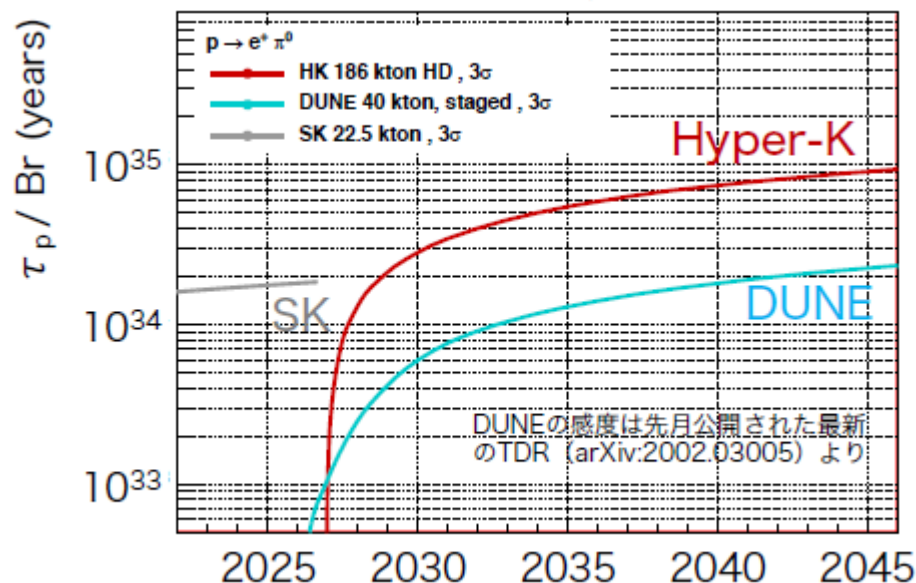
(Better photon counting also contributes improvement)

Sensitivity for $p \rightarrow e^+ \pi^0$

Expected signal after 10 years run
assuming the current lifetime limit



3 σ discovery potential



$0 < p_{tot} < 100 \text{ MeV}/c$		$100 < p_{tot} < 250 \text{ MeV}/c$	
ϵ_{sig} [%]	Bkg [/Mton·yr]	ϵ_{sig} [%]	Bkg [/Mton·yr]
18.7 ± 1.2	0.06 ± 0.02	19.4 ± 2.9	0.62 ± 0.20

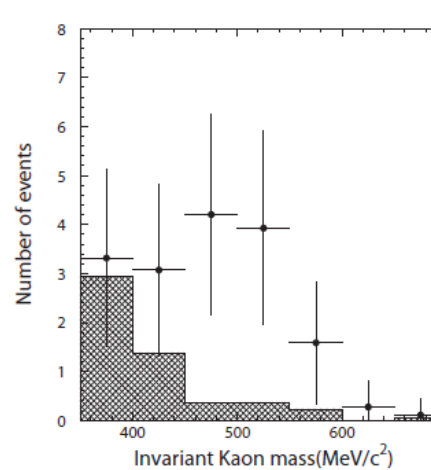
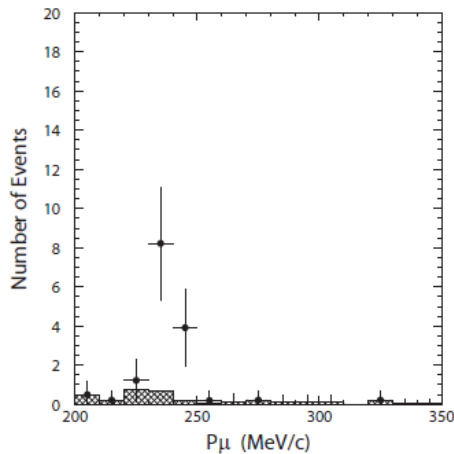
(SK: 0.18)

(SK: 1.1)

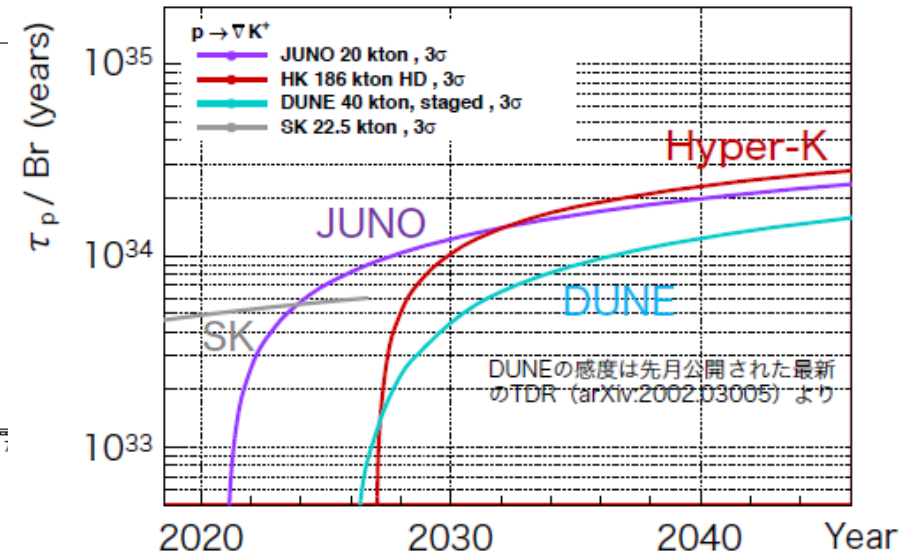
Reach to 10^{35} years !

Sensitivity for $p \rightarrow \nu K^+$

Expected signal after 10 years run
assuming the current lifetime limit



3σ discovery potential



Prompt γ		$\pi^+\pi^0$		p_μ Spectrum		
ϵ_{sig} [%]	Bkg [/Mton·yr]	ϵ_{sig} [%]	Bkg [/Mton·yr]	ϵ_{sig} [%]	Bkg [/Mton·yr]	σ_{fit} [%]
12.7 ± 2.4	0.9 ± 0.2	10.8 ± 1.1	0.7 ± 0.2	31.0	1916.0	8.0

Better sensitivity than
other detectors !.

6. Summary

- Proton decay is a key phenomena of Grand Unified Theories beyond the Standard Model.
- Super-Kamiokande is the leading detector to hunt proton decays and have searched for it for more than 20 years.
- However, no evidence has been observed and the current proton lifetime limits are around 10^{34} years.
- It may be around the corner ! Hope three times lucky in Hyper-Kamiokande.