

The Energy Scale Calibration Using the Moon Shadow of LHAASO-WCDA Detector

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The Water Cherenkov Detector Array (WCDA) of LHAASO are designed to work in combination for measuring the energy spectra of the cosmic ray species over a very wide energy range from a few TeV to 10 PeV. The energy calibration can be achieved with a proven technique of measuring the westward shift of Moon shadow cast by galactic cosmic rays due to the geomagnetic field. This deflection angle Δ is inversely proportional to the cosmic ray rigidity. The precise measurement of the shifts by WCDA allows us to calibrate its energy scale for energies as high as 35 TeV. In this work, we demonstrate the feasibility of the method using the data collected from May 2019 to January 2020 by WCDA-1, the first of the three water Cherenkov ponds, already commissioned at the LHAASO site.

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1. Introduction

The energy spectrum measurement is very important to reveal the origin and acceleration mechanism of cosmic ray. In recent years, there are some ground base experiments for the cosmic ray measurement such as a scintillation counter array, water Cherenkov detectors, or imaging air Cherenkov telescopes. However, there are some difficulties in energy spectrum measurement for cosmic rays with energies higher than 10 TeV. Therefore, results of different energy spectrum measurement experiments are not very consistent, which may be caused by uncertainty of the absolute energy scale. So, it is mandatory to establish a way to calibrate the shower energy measurement between the different detectors, a non-trivial task given that it has to be done directly using cosmic ray data. Many experiments, such as ARGO-YBJ [1], have successfully calibrated their energy-scale by using the deficit of cosmic rays blocked by Moon, which is called Moon shadow. The geo-magnetic-field (GMF), deflecting the charged cosmic rays, shifts Moon shadow on the ground with respect to Moon real position. The displacement of the shadow is clearly dependent on the rigidity, and becomes negligible at high energies. However, at energies below 40 TeV the shadow shift westward is clearly observable.

The Water Cherenkov Detector Array (WCDA) of the Large High Altitude Air Shower Observatory (LHAASO) has a detection threshold of about 1 TeV for cosmic rays. WCDA has measured Moon shadow shifts as a function of N_{pe} . Here N_{pe} is the total number of photo-electrons measured by units with trigger time within 30 ns from the shower conical front. A data set has been collected from 01/05/2019 to 31/01/2020 with 731.2 hours of Moon observation with zenith angle smaller than 45° . The reconstruction of arrival directions and shower cores is described in reference [2]. To obtain the significance of the shadowing effect, events with cores located both inside and outside the pond 1 are used. The significance of Moon shadow for each N_{pe} group is greater than 10σ .

In this work, firstly we briefly describe the LHAASO observatory detectors in section 2. In section 3, we introduced the measurement of Moon shadow shifts for high energy showers. It is shown the calculation of Moon shadow shifts by raytracing in GMF from simulation in section 4. In 4, we discuss how the energy scale for WCDA-1 can be established using Moon shadow shift measurement for energies above 6 TeV. The uncertainties of the energy scale are also discussed in the section.

2. The LHAASO WCDA arrays

The LHAASO Observatory is based on the so-called 'hybrid' approach for the measurement of shower characteristics, consisting in the simultaneous detection of atmospheric showers with different types of detectors. The observatory is built around the three ponds of water Cherenkov Detector Array (WCDA), featuring 3120 gap-less detecting units to instrument an area of 78,000 m². Near WCDA 18 wide field of view Cherenkov telescopes (WFCTA) are installed. They survey the sky above the whole array with a coverage of 4608 square degrees [3] [4]. This core of the array is surrounded by 5195 scintillation counters (ED) and 1188 muon detectors (MD), which constitute an array covering an area of 1 km² (KM2A) [3] [4]. The construction of LHAASO has nearly been completed.

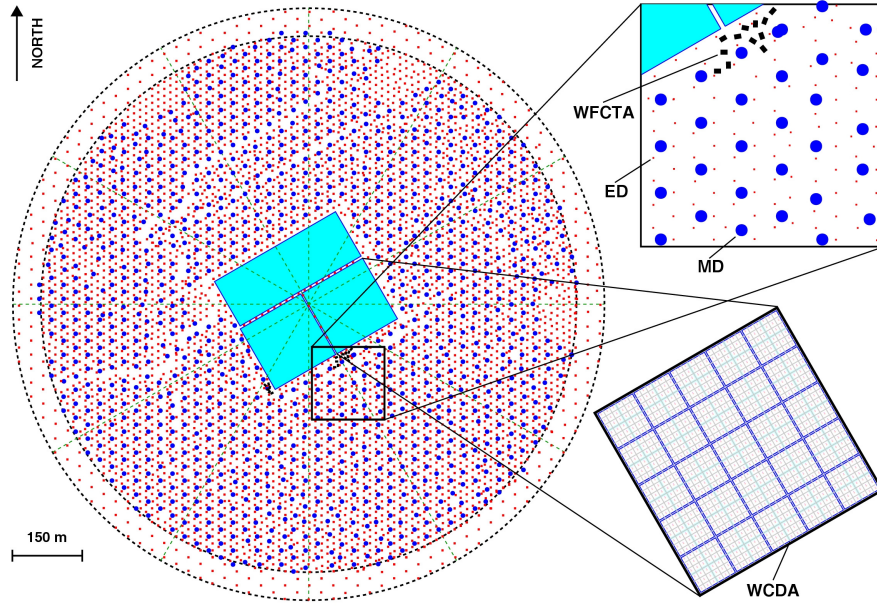


Figure 1: The LHAASO layout. The three ponds of WCDA are represented by the cyan rectangles at the center of the site, each divided into 900 square cells of $5 \times 5 \text{ m}^2$ grouped into 25 clusters (as can be seen in the zoomed view at the bottom right). The 18 WFCTA telescopes, positioned near the WCDA, can be seen in the zoomed view at the top right. The remaining KM2A extends over an area of about 1 km^2 , instrumented with the electromagnetic detector (ED) array of scintillation counters (small red dots) and the muon detector array (big blue dots).

As shown in Fig. 1, WCDA is composed of two ponds with an area of $150 \text{ m} \times 150 \text{ m}$ each and a third larger one with an area of $300 \text{ m} \times 110 \text{ m}$. The smaller pond in the South-West direction, named WCDA-1, has started science operations since April 2019. It has 900 units, or cells, of 25 m^2 , each equipped with a large (8") PMT used also for timing and a small (1.5") PMT at the center of each unit at 4.4 m of depth from the water surface. The use of two PMTs watching upwards allows us to cover a wide dynamic range spanning from 1 to 200,000 photo-electrons, which are generated by the Cherenkov light produced in water by the shower charged secondary particles. To suppress the light cross-talking effect and improve the timing resolution, black plastic curtains delimit the units. The front-end electronics (FEE) of the large PMTs is designed to achieve a time resolution of 0.5 ns enough to reconstruct the shower front conical structure. The large dynamic range provided by the combined operation of PMTs enables the measurement of the particle density distribution in the shower cores without any saturation even for energetic showers up to 10 PeV. This allows to measure the core location with a precision better than 3 m over a wide energy range. WCDA-1 can measure shower directions with a resolution better than 0.2° above 10 TeV and 1.0° above 600 GeV [2]. The water transmission can be monitored by the 'muon' peak observed by each unit [2].

3. Measurement of Moon shadow shifts

The selection of energy parameter for Moon shadow and energy scale analysis is very important. N_{pe} may represent a robust estimator up to very high energies [2] which is a good proxy for energy in this work. The distribution of N_{pe} is shown in Fig. 2 when N_{hit} greater than 100, 200, or 300. We can learn that the efficiency of the range measured is high when $N_{pe} > 50,000$. Showers reconstructed in WCDA-1 with N_{hit} more than 200 have a good angular resolution of 0.39° [2].

Datas used for Moon shadow analysis are selected from 01/05/2019 to 31/01/2020. The total effective observation time of Moon is 731.2 hours and the total number of events is about 4.17 million with arrival direction within 5° to the normal Moon position. The standard reconstruction procedure has been adopted, all reconstruction data with N_{hit} more than 200 and the zenith angles smaller than 45° . Samples are grouped into 6 groups according to N_{pe} as shown in Table 1. In the analysis, the equal zenith angle method [5] is used and the sky map is divide into a grid of $0.02^\circ \times 0.02^\circ$. The significance calculation in each grid is estimated by Li & Ma formula [6] in this work. For the N_{pe} group with $N_{pe} > 60,000$, a significance as high as 10.9σ can be achieved

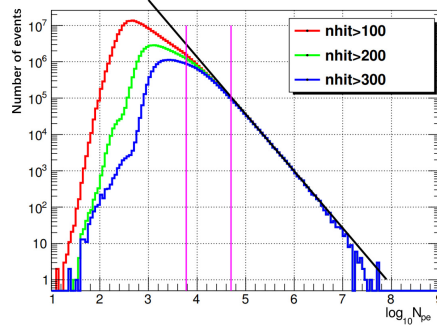


Figure 2: The distribution of the total number of photo-electrons, N_{pe} , for shower events coming from a region around the normal Moon position. The histograms in red, green and blue correspond to events with number of hit cells, N_{hit} , greater than 100, 200 and 300, respectively. The black solid line indicates a power law $\propto N_{pe}^{-2.6}$, which fits the histograms for $N_{pe} > 50,000$. The two vertical magenta lines indicate the range used for the energy calibration using Moon shadow.

as shown in Fig. 3. The deficit number of events map can be obtained by the difference between source on and source off window, After casting shadow of the map on the right ascension (RA) and declination (Dec) direction, it can be fitted by one dimensional Gaussian function to determine the location of the shadow center. Its shift with respect to the normal Moon position is $0.02^\circ \pm 0.03^\circ$ in the Dec direction, while is quite small in the RA direction, i.e., -0.01 ± 0.03 . These results of 6 groups is summarized in Table 1, and the statistical uncertainty is the dominant contribution given the limited statistics.

4. Calculation of Moon shadow shifts by raytracing in GMF

In energy scale analysis, it need to know the relationship between energy and deflection angle, it can be obtained by Moon shadow simulation. First of all, this work is simulate the deflection motion of cosmic rays in the magnetic field of Earth and Moon. In this paper, it is assumed that cosmic rays

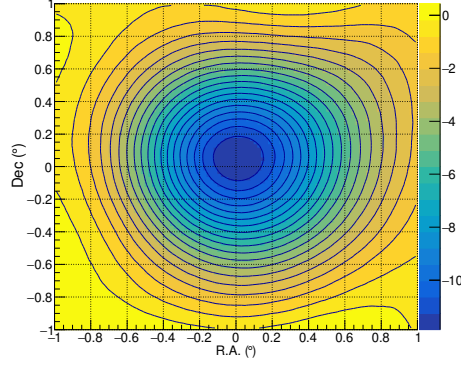


Figure 3: The significance map of Moon shadow for shower events detected by WCDA-1 with $N_{pe} > 60,000$. The deflection of the cosmic rays by the GMF, at such high energies, is seen to be quite small. The coordinates are centered on Moon position. The color scale represents the statistical significance of the deficit in terms of standard deviations.

have hit the detector and traced back to Moon, which greatly improves the simulation efficiency. If the event hits Moon, it can be used as a Moon shadow event. When tracking in the opposite direction, the charge of the cosmic ray particles is opposite to the original charge. In the simulation process, the propagation of primary particles from Moon to Earth is affected by the geomagnetic field and the IGRF model [7] has been used in this work. The Geopack package is called when calculating the magnetic field strength of the geomagnetic field. When the distance from the center of Earth are 1 and 6 radius of Earth, the total intensity distribution of the geomagnetic field given by the IGRF model is shown in Fig. 4. The expected Moon shadow shift westward has been

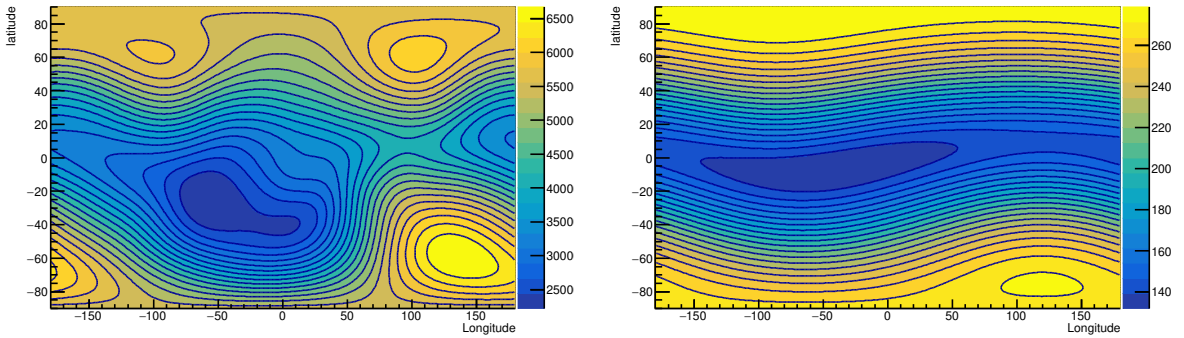


Figure 4: Left: The strength from International Geomagnetic Reference Field model at one Earth radius. Right: The strength from International Geomagnetic Reference Field model at six Earth radius.

calculated by using a ray-tracing simulation which propagates protons and helium nuclei coming from Moon direction through GMF. We find that the displacement obtained applying this model to the propagation of protons and helium nuclei can be represented approximately:

$$\Delta = 1.59^\circ / R(TV), \quad (1)$$

Table 1: Moon shadow shifts in RA, the significance of Moon shadow.

Range of N_{pe}	Shift of the Moon shadow ($^{\circ}$)	Significance (σ)
6,000-10,000	-0.32 ± 0.04	18.2
10,000-15,000	-0.25 ± 0.04	14.0
15,000-20,000	-0.15 ± 0.04	11.6
20,000-30,000	-0.11 ± 0.03	11.9
30,000-60,000	-0.06 ± 0.03	10.8
>60,000	-0.01 ± 0.03	10.9

where $R(TV)$ is the particle rigidity $E(\text{TeV})/Z$. Thus the expected shift for helium nuclei is a factor of 2 greater than the shift of protons of the same energy. However, for a given energy, the shower size N_e of Helium nuclei is less than the size of proton-induced shower. The median energies and trigger efficiencies of protons and Helium nuclei in a given N_{pe} interval, have been obtained by detailed simulations by CORSIKA v75000 and detector responses. In CORSIKA v75000, the hadronic models EPOS-LHC and FLUKA are selected above and below 100 GeV, respectively [2].

We should also consider the composition and primary protons and helium nuclei and LHAASO-WCDA trigger efficiency in this simulation. The flux of primary protons and helium nuclei is measured already by direct detection experiments, such as CREAM [8] and DAMPE [9] [10] at energies above 1TeV. According to their results, the mixture of protons and helium nuclei is nearly 1:1 from 1.5TeV and 60 TeV. In order to estimate the ratio of protons and helium nuclei after array detection, the simulation of air showers and the WCDA-1 response to the showers is done. It is found the ratio becomes 2:1 with the $N_{hit} > 200$ and N_{pe} in the range from 6,000 to 60,000 and the median energy of helium nuclei is 1.9 times that of protons, i.e. $E_{He} \approx 1.9E_p$. The change of the ratio is due to two reasons: 1) The trigger efficiency of WCDA-1 is slightly different for two types of showers induced by protons and helium nuclei; 2) For showers having a given N_{pe} the energy of He are slightly higher than protons, thus the He flux is lower than that of P in a given N_{pe} range even if full trigger efficiency is achieved. So the amount of the shift is $\Delta = 2.1/E[\text{TeV}]$ where E is the median energy of the fixed N_{pe} range.

5. Energy Scale results and summary

As a good approximation, the energy scale is established over the energy range from 6.6 TeV to 35 TeV by using the energy estimator, N_{pe} . Results of Moon shadow shifts for each N_{pe} group are shown in Table 1. The median energy and corresponding uncertainty for each point is estimated according to the reversed linear relationship $\Delta = 2.1/E[\text{TeV}]$. The best fit with $E[\text{GeV}] = bN_{pe}^{\beta}$ are $\beta = 0.95 \pm 0.17$ and $b = 1.33^{+5.26}_{-1.06}$ and the energy scale result in the N_{pe} range 6,000-60,000 is as shown in Fig. 5. The uncertainty of Moon shadow shift can be transferred to the energy scale by using the fact that $d\Delta/\Delta = dE/E$. Therefore, we can obtain the uncertainty in the energy scale from 12% at 6.6 TeV to 50% at 35 TeV. There are also some systematic uncertainties should be not neglect. According to simulations, an uncertainty is 3% obtained if the ratio of protons to helium nuclei 10% changing and the uncertainties due to different hadronic models cause less than 2%. In addition, an uncertainty of 4% is caused by energy and angular resolution of the detector.

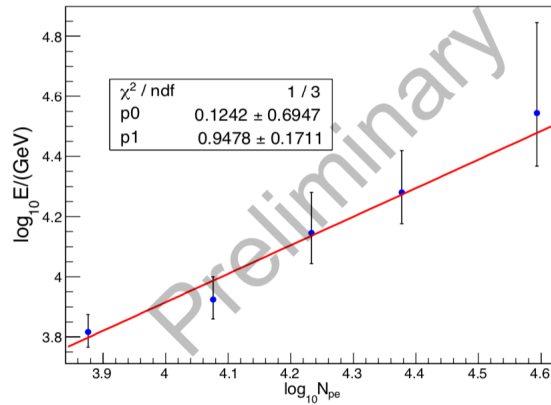


Figure 5: The average shower energy measured using Moon shadow shift versus N_{pe} , the total number of photo-electrons detected by WCDA-1 detector.

6. Acknowledgments

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