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X-ray emission from the mixed-morphology supernova remnant HB 9

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Abstract

We present the results of a spectral analysis of the central region of the mixed-morphology supernova remnant HB 9. A prior Ginga observation of this source detected a hard X-ray component above 4 keV, and the origin of this particular X-ray component is still unknown. Our results demonstrate that the extracted X-ray spectra are best represented by a model consisting of a collisional ionization equilibrium plasma with a temperature of \sim 0.1–0.2 keV (interstellar matter component) and an ionizing plasma with a temperature of \sim 0.6–0.7 keV and an ionization timescale of >1 \times 10¹¹ cm⁻³ s (ejecta component). No significant X-ray emission was found in the central region above 4 keV. The recombining plasma model reported by a previous work does not explain our spectra.

Key words: ISM: individual objects (HB 9) — ISM: supernova remnants — X-rays: ISM

1 Introduction

HB 9 (G160.9+2.6) is a supernova remnant (SNR) having a shell-like morphology with a large angular extent of \sim 2° in the radio band. The measured integrated flux density at 1 GHz and radio spectral index α (defined as $S \propto \nu^{-\alpha}$) are 110 Jy and 0.64, respectively (Leahy & Roger 1991; Leahy et al. 1998; Leahy & Tian 2007). Based on observations of H1 cloud structures which are probably associated with HB 9, a distance to HB 9 of only 0.8±0.4 kpc has been proposed (Leahy & Tian 2007). Sezer et al. (2019) reported a consistent result of 0.6±0.3 kpc. The age was estimated to be 4000–7000 yr (Leahy & Tian 2007), and hence HB 9 is a middle-aged SNR. Araya (2014) reported the detection of extended gamma-ray emission from the

position of HB 9 based on analysis of 5.5 yr of data collected by Fermi observations. Those authors derived fits to the gamma-ray spectrum using both leptonic and hadronic models. More recently, through analysis of 10 yr of data collected by Fermi observations, Sezer et al. (2019) discovered three gamma-ray point sources seen toward the position of HB 9. Of these three sources, two are located within the extended gamma-ray emission region and the radio shell.

X-ray observations of HB 9 were made by Einstein (Leahy 1987), Ginga (Yamauchi & Koyama 1993, hereafter YK93), and ROSAT (Leahy & Aschenbach 1995). The X-ray imaging observations showed that the X-ray morphology is center-filled: the contrast between the X-ray morphology and its shell-like radio morphology

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establishes HB 9 as a mixed-morphology (MM) SNR (Rho & Petre 1998). Prior X-ray spectral analyses of this SNR have revealed the existence of a thin thermal plasma associated with HB 9. The initial analysis of data from the Einstein observations suggested the presence of electron temperature ($kT_{\rm e}$) variations $kT_{\rm e} \sim 0.4$ – ~ 1.2 keV, with the temperature decreasing from center to edge (Leahy 1987). However, later analysis of data from the ROSAT observations (Leahy & Aschenbach 1995) found no evidence for significant temperature variations across the X-ray emitting plasma. The values for $kT_{\rm e}$ reported by those authors for different portions of the plasma only spanned the range $kT_{\rm e} \sim 0.7$ –0.8 keV.

The large area counter (LAC) onboard Ginga was a non-imaging detector with a field of view (FOV) of 1° × 2° (full width at half maximum). YK93 reported the presence of a hard X-ray component in the LAC spectrum in addition to the soft thermal emission. The temperature of the soft X-ray component was estimated to be $kT_e \sim$ 0.4-0.7 keV, while the hard X-ray component was fitted with either a thin thermal plasma model with a higher temperature ($kT_e \sim 6-7 \,\mathrm{keV}$) or a power-law function with a photon index of $\Gamma \sim 2.3$. The origin of this hard X-ray component is not clear. YK93 speculated about different mechanisms that might produce it: the background active galactic nucleus (AGN) known as 4C 46.09 seen in projection toward HB 9 (z = 0.195; Seward et al. 1991), intracluster gas associated with the cluster of galaxies to which 4C 46.09 belongs, or a second X-ray emitting plasma associated with HB 9. The authors argued that 4C 46.09 and the intracluster gas cannot explain the total flux. If the hard X-ray component is associated with HB 9, it is another issue how the hard X-ray component was made. Unfortunately, HB 9 has not yet been the target of pointed observations made by the current generation of X-ray observatories and a clear understanding of the properties of the hard X-ray component and X-ray emitting plasma (including the true nature of the hard X-ray component) remains elusive.

Recent X-ray observations have revealed that some fraction of MM SNRs have a recombining plasma (RP) which has a higher ionization state than that expected from the electron temperature (e.g., IC 443, Yamaguchi et al. 2009; W 49 B, Ozawa et al. 2009; W 28, Sawada & Koyama 2012; G346.6–0.2, Yamauchi et al. 2013). Sezer et al. (2019) analyzed the Suzaku data of HB 9 and reported that a spectrum of part of the central region of the SNR is represented by the RP model.

To improve our understanding of HB 9—in particular, its X-ray spectral properties and the nature of the reported hard X-ray component—we reanalyzed the Suzaku data collected from observations made of the central extended X-ray emission of this SNR. In this paper we report on the

results of the spectral analysis. The quoted errors are the 90% confidence level unless otherwise mentioned.

2 Observations

Suzaku observations of the SNR HB 9 were carried out with the X-ray Imaging Spectrometor (XIS, Koyama et al. 2007) placed at the focal planes of the thin foil X-ray Telescopes (XRT, Serlemitsos et al. 2007). Two positions were observed: the east and west parts of the central bright region of HB 9. The XIS FOV (17.8×17.8) are shown on the ROSAT intensity map in figure 1. The data used in this analysis are listed in table 1.

The XIS consists of four sensors: XIS sensor-1 (XIS 1) is a back-side illuminated (BI) charge-coupled device (CCD), while the other three XIS sensors (XIS 0, 2, and 3) are front-side illuminated (FI) CCDs. Since XIS 2 became dysfunctional in 2006 November, observations were made with the XIS 0, 1, and 3. A small fraction of the XIS 0 area was not used because of damage, possibly due to the impact of a micrometeorite on 2009 June 23. The XIS was operated in the normal clocking mode. The XIS employed the spaced-row charge injection (SCI) technique to rejuvenate its spectral resolution by filling the charge traps with artificially injected electrons through CCD readouts. Details concerning the SCI technique are given by Nakajima et al. (2008) and Uchiyama et al. (2009).

3 Analysis and results

Data reduction and analysis were performed using HEA-soft version 6.25, XSPEC version 12.10.1, and AtomDB version 3.0.9. The XIS data in the South Atlantic Anomaly, during Earth occultation, and at low elevation angle from the Earth rim of <5° (night Earth) and <20° (day Earth) were excluded. Removing hot and flickering pixels, data with grades 0, 2, 3, 4, and 6 were used. The XIS pulse-height data were converted to pulse-invariant channels using the xispi software and the calibration database version 2018-10-10. The resultant exposure times are listed in table 1.

During the observations, the count rates of the non-X-ray background (NXB) of XIS 1 were systematically higher than those of the NXB data generated by xisnxbgen (Tawa et al. 2008). Accordingly, we utilized only the FI in the following analysis.

3.1 Image

Figure 2 shows X-ray images in the soft X-ray (0.5–2 keV) and hard X-ray (4–10 keV) bands. The soft X-ray band images are consistent with those of ROSAT (see figure 1). In contrast, the hard X-ray band images show no significant X-ray emission except for a point source at the east edge

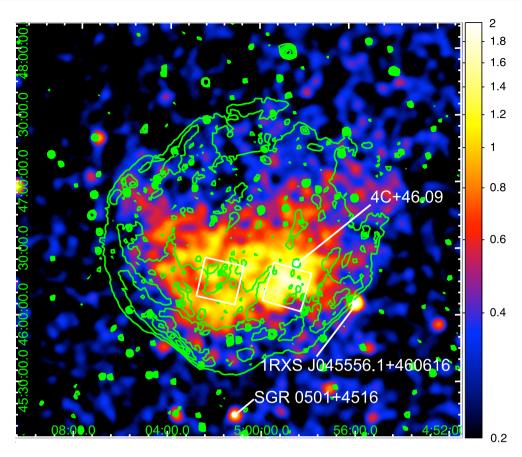


Fig. 1. X-ray (ROSAT, color) and radio band (1420 MHz, processed by the Canadian Galactic Plane Survey Consortium, green contour) images of HB 9, taken from the catalog of High Energy Observations of Galactic Supernova Remnants (Ferrand & Safi-Harb 2012; http://www.physics.umanitoba.ca/snr/SNRcat). The squares show the XIS FOV of the present observations. The scale is an arbitrary unit. (Color online)

Table 1. Observation logs.

Part	Obs. ID	Obs. date Obs. ID start time–end time (RA, Dec) _{J2000.0}		
West	509032010	2014-09-30 19:02:01–2014-10-01 22:00:16	(4 ^h 58 ^m 49 ^s , 46°13′56″)	49.8
East	509033010	2014-09-29 16:20:36–2014-09-30 19:00:16	(5 ^h 01 ^m 45 ^s , 46°16′46″)	51.1

of the FOV of the east part (hereafter, the hard source). The position of the hard source was estimated to be (RA, $Dec)_{J2000.0} = (5^h02^m31^s0, 46^\circ18'29'')$, with an uncertainty of \sim 1'. Using the SIMBAD database, we identified the source TYC 3344-311-1 = 2MASS J05023446+4618385 (with an offset of 37") as a possible counterpart to the hard source. The spectral and temporal properties of the hard source are presented in the Appendix.

3.2 Spectrum

The spectrum of the sky background was estimated from the the anti-center sky in a similar Galactic latitude to that of HB 9 [Obs. ID 409019010, (l, b) = (196.96, +1.53)]. The spectrum consists of the Milky way halo (MWH),

local hot bubble (LHB), and cosmic X-ray background (CXB). Since HB 9 is located at the anti-center region with Galactic latitude $b=2.^{\circ}6$, the Galactic ridge X-ray emission (GRXE) is ignored (Uchiyama et al. 2013; Yamauchi et al. 2016). The parameters of the MWH and LHB were assumed to be the same as the values used by Hirayama et al. (2019), while those of the CXB were fixed to the values in Kushino et al. (2002). In addition, after 2011, the Suzaku spectrum exhibited an emission line at 525 eV, which is a fluorescent line from atmospheric oxygen (OI), originating from solar X-rays (Sekiya et al. 2014). Thus, we also added a Gaussian representing the OI line at 525 eV in the spectral fitting. Response files, redistribution matrix files (RMFs), and ancillary response files (ARFs) were created using xisrmfgen and xissimarfgen (Ishisaki et al. 2007).

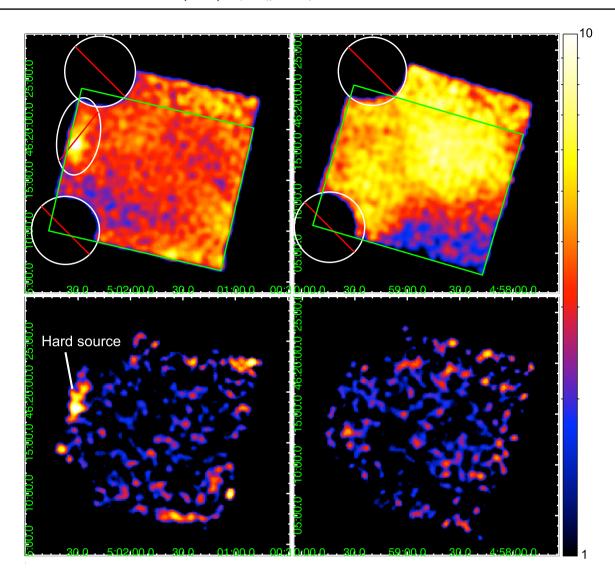


Fig. 2. XIS images of HB 9: the upper panels are soft X-ray band images for 0.5–2 keV, and the lower panels are hard X-ray band images for 4–10 keV. On the left is the east part and on the right is the west part. The NXB subtraction and vignetting correction were performed. The coordinates are J2000.0. The color bar shows the intensity levels in arbitrary units. The green square excluding the areas by the white lines shows the region from which the X-ray spectrum is extracted. (Color online)

Since the ARFs are normalized to the flux from the assumed emission region, the ARFs for the sky background were made assuming the same uniform sky as in the background model fit of Hirayama et al. (2019), while those for the SNR component were made using the sky image obtained with the Suzaku XIS.

Spectra of HB 9 were extracted from the regions shown in figure 2. Regions corresponding to the calibration source, the hard source, and damaged pixels were excluded. The NXB estimated using xisnxbgen (Tawa et al. 2008) was subtracted. In order to increase photon statistics, we added the spectra of XIS 0 and 3 and re-binned the spectra with \gtrsim 25 counts for <2 keV and \gtrsim 10 counts for >2 keV. Figure 3 shows the NXB-subtracted spectrum in the

0.6–10 keV band. The gray line shows the contribution of the sky background. It clearly shows that X-ray emission from the SNR is detected only below 3 keV, which is consistent with the image (subsection 3.1 and figure 2).

Taking account of the low electron density of the interstellar medium (for example, $\sim 1 \, \mathrm{cm}^{-3}$) and the age of SNRs ($10^{3-4} \, \mathrm{yr}$), most SNRs should be in an ionizing phase. Thus, we applied an ionizing plasma (IP) model (the vrnei model in XSPEC) with low-energy absorption. The initial electron temperature, kT_{init} , was fixed to 0.0808 keV (the minimum value of the code). The cross section of the photoelectric absorption and the abundance tables were taken from Balucinska-Church and McCammon (1992) and Anders and Grevesse (1989), respectively. The abundances of Ne,

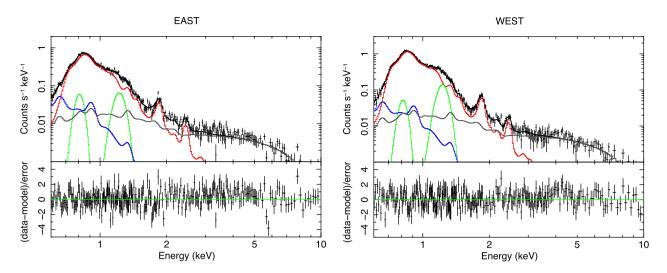


Fig. 3. XIS spectra (upper panel) and residuals from the best-fitting model (lower panel): on the left is the east part and on the right is the west part. The blue, red, green, and gray solid lines show emission from ISM, ejecta, Fe-L lines, and the sky background (MWH + LHB + CXB), respectively. The errors of the data points are at the 1 σ level. (Color online)

Mg, Si, S, and Fe (= Ni) were free parameters, and the others were assumed to be solar. We added two Gaussians at ~0.8 keV and ~1.2 keV to reproduce features due to incomplete atomic data for the Fe-L shell complex in the current plasma model (e.g., Nakashima et al. 2013). In the spectral fitting, we applied an energy scale adjustment using a linear function. Although the model represented the spectrum above $\sim 1 \text{ keV } (\chi^2/\text{d.o.f.} = 367/257 \text{ and } 347/257$ for the east and west parts, respectively), we found some residuals less than 0.7 keV. Thus, we added another plasma model in the collisional ionization equilibrium (CIE) state (the apec model in XSPEC). Since the abundance of the CIE model was not well constrained, the abundance was fixed to the solar value. The model represented the spectra well: the χ^2 /d.o.f. value is 315/255 for the east part and 281/255 for the west part. The electron temperatures of the CIE plasma and IP components are $\sim 0.1-0.2 \,\text{keV}$ and $\sim 0.6-0.7 \,\text{keV}$, respectively. The best-fitting model is plotted in figure 3, and the best-fitting parameters are listed in table 2.

We note that the intensity of the sky background varies by $\pm 10\%$, so the results are the same within the errors. We also carried out the spectral analysis using other sky background data obtained at the anti-center [Obs. ID 703019010, $(l, b) = (165^{\circ}.08, +5^{\circ}.70)$], and obtained consistent results. Taking account of variations in errors derived from different sky background data, we estimated the uncertainties of spectral parameters (table 2).

4 Discussion

4.1 Plasma state

The X-ray spectrum obtained with Suzaku was well represented by a two-component model of the CIE plasma

with a temperature of \sim 0.1–0.2 keV and the IP with a temperature of \sim 0.6–0.7 keV. These would be the interstellar matter (ISM) and the ejecta components, respectively. The spectrum is consistent with those of middle-aged SNRs.

Recently, Sezer et al. (2019) reported results of the spectral analysis of the Suzaku data. The spectrum was fitted with a two-component model: the west part spectrum was represented by the CIE ($kT_{\rm e}=0.42\,{\rm keV}$) + RP ($kT_{\rm e}=1.13\,{\rm keV}$ and $kT_{\rm init}=3.14\,{\rm keV}$) model, while the east part spectrum was explained by the CIE ($kT_{\rm e}=0.51\,{\rm keV}$) + IP ($kT_{\rm e}=0.97\,{\rm keV}$) model. However, no significant difference in the X-ray spectra between the east and west parts is seen (figure 2 of Sezer et al. 2019).

The spectrum in Sezer et al. (2019) is almost the same as ours. Using the abundance tables in Wilms, Alle, and McCray (2000) that Sezer et al. (2019) used, we applied the CIE+RP model, fixing the spectral parameters, except for the normalization, to those of Sezer et al. (2019) for the west part spectrum, and found that the model was completely rejected (a reduced χ^2 value of >5). In the case of the east spectrum analysis (the CIE+IP model fit), the electron temperatures in Sezer et al. (2019) are obviously higher than ours. The difference between the results in this paper and those given in Sezer et al. (2019) could be due to the differences in sky background estimation.

Here, using our spectral data, we examined whether HB 9 possesses an RP or not. The CIE+RP model of $kT_{\rm init}=3$ keV with free electron temperature, recombining timescale, abundances, and $N_{\rm H}$ value was also applied to both the east and west spectra, but no improvement from the CIE+IP model (see table 2) was found. The electron temperature and recombining time scale of the ejecta component were 0.6–0.7 keV and $\gtrsim 10^{12}$ cm⁻³ s, respectively, which shows that the plasma is not the apparent RP. In

Table 2. Best-fitting spectral parameters for HB 9.

		Valu	e*	
Parameter	Eas	t	Wes	t
		Absorption		
$N_{\rm H}~(\times~10^{21}~{\rm cm}^{-2})$	$1.6^{+0.5}_{-0.4}$	(0.2–2.1)	$2.0_{-0.4}^{+0.3}$	(1.3-2.3)
	ISM: Collisio	onal ionization equilibrium pl	asma	
$kT_{\rm e}~({\rm keV})$	$0.15^{+0.03}_{-0.02}$	(0.13-0.19)	$0.15^{+0.04}_{-0.02}$	(0.13-0.20)
Abundance [†]	1 (fixed)		1 (fixed)	
	H	Ejecta: Ionizing plasma		
$kT_{\rm e}~({\rm keV})$	0.67 ± 0.02	(0.65 - 0.71)	0.66 ± 0.01	(0.65-0.68)
$n_{\rm e}t~(\times~10^{11}~{\rm cm}^{-3}~{\rm s})$	>4	(>1)	>5	(>2)
Ne^{\dagger}	$1.5^{+1.6}_{-0.9}$	(0.5–4.5)	$1.5^{+0.8}_{-0.9}$	(0.4-3.1)
Mg^\dagger	$1.5^{+1.5}_{-0.7}$	(0.7–4.4)	$2.8_{-1.2}^{+2.3}$	(1.3-8.2)
Si^{\dagger}	$1.8^{+1.0}_{-0.6}$	(1.0-4.2)	$3.6_{-1.2}^{+2.4}$	(2.0-9.6)
S^\dagger	$3.1^{+2.3}_{-0.9}$	(1.6-5.6)	$4.9_{-1.2}^{+1.1}$	(2.4-8.6)
$Fe=Ni^{\dagger}$	$2.8^{+1.7}_{-1.0}$	(1.6-6.8)	$6.4_{-2.2}^{+6.0}$	(3.5-15.8)
Others [†]	1 (fixed)		1 (fixed)	
χ^2 /d.o.f.	315/255 = 1.24		281/255 = 1.10	

^{*}Statistical errors and error ranges derived from different sky background data (in parentheses) are quoted.

fact, the spectra in both the east and west parts show no obvious RP features, such as radiative recombination continuum or intense lines from hydrogen-like ions (see the residuals in figure 3). Thus, the claim that HB 9 possesses RP has not been established yet.

4.2 Origin of the hard X-ray component found with Ginga

YK93 reported the presence of a hard X-ray component in the spectrum observed with Ginga. The $N_{\rm H}$ -corrected flux of the hard X-ray component in the 2–10 keV band is $\sim 6 \times 10^{-12} \, {\rm erg \, s^{-1} \, cm^{-2}}$. The authors argued that the hard X-ray component may not be fully attributable to 4C 46.09 and surrounding intracluster gas, and at least 30% of the observed flux ($\gtrsim 2 \times 10^{-12} \, {\rm erg \, s^{-1} \, cm^{-2}}$) is likely attributable to HB 9. Since aspect correction was not performed, the Ginga flux is a lower limit (YK93). We observed the central parts of HB 9 with Suzaku and could not detect the hard X-ray component (an energy flux of $\lesssim 3 \times 10^{-13} \, {\rm erg \, s^{-1} \, cm^{-2} \, FOV^{-1}}$ in the 2–10 keV band, if any). This indicates that the hard X-ray component would not be a hot interior of HB 9, as proposed in YK93.

The FOV of the Ginga LAC includes the overall structure shown in figure 1. Since several discrete sources have been discovered around HB 9 so far, a substantial flux may be attributable to the sources. Here, we calculate the energy fluxes of three sources: the hard source found in this observation, a soft gamma-ray repeater

SGR 0501+4516 (Barthelmy et al. 2008), and 1RXS J045556.1+460616 (Voges et al. 1999). The hard source exhibits a hard spectrum, and the observed flux is \sim 3 \times $10^{-13} \,\mathrm{erg} \,\mathrm{s}^{-1} \,\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ in the 2–10 keV band (see the Appendix). SGR 0501+4516 in the quiescent phase was observed with XMM-Newton and the spectrum was fitted well with an absorbed blackbody + power law model (Camero et al. 2014). Using the best-fitting parameters, we calculated the flux to be $\sim 2 \times 10^{-12} \, \mathrm{erg \, s^{-1} \, cm^{-2}}$ in the 2-10 keV band. 1RXS J045556.1+460616 is identified with a rotationally variable star TYC 3344-1956-1 = 2MASS J0455617+4606160 (SIMBAD database). The ROSAT count rate is 0.18 count s⁻¹, which corresponds to $\sim (0.1-1) \times 10^{-12} \, \text{erg s}^{-1}$ in the 2–10 keV band, assuming thin thermal emission with a temperature of 1-3 keV. Based on the above estimation, most of the hard X-ray component would originate from discrete sources in the Ginga LAC FOV.

5 Conclusion

Using data obtained with Suzaku, we conducted a detailed spectral analysis of the central region of the SNR HB 9. The results are summarized as follows.

 A previous study of HB 9 with the Ginga LAC suggested the presence of a hard X-ray component (YK93). We found no significant hard component to the X-ray emission from the central region of HB 9. Most of the hard

[†]Abundance relative to the solar value (Anders & Grevesse 1989).

X-ray component would originate from discrete sources in the Ginga LAC FOV.

• In order to investigate the physical state of the plasma associated with HB 9, we fitted the spectrum with a plasma model and found that the X-ray spectrum was represented by a model consisting of a CIE plasma with a temperature of $\sim 0.1-0.2$ keV (ISM component) and an IP with a temperature of $\sim 0.6-0.7$ keV and an ionization timescale of $> 1 \times 10^{11}$ cm⁻³ s (ejecta component). We found no clear evidence of the RP.

The present observations only targeted two small parts of the central region of HB 9. In order to investigate the overall properties of the SNR, observations of the entire region in the wide energy band are required.

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Appendix. Properties of the hard source

A source spectrum was extracted from an elliptical region centered on the source position, while the background spectrum was extracted from a nearby region in the same FOV. We fitted the spectrum after background subtraction with either a power-law model or a thin thermal plasma model (the apec model in XSPEC), modified with low energy absorption. The parallax of the optical/infrared counterpart of the source is 0.6438 mas (SIMBAD database), which corresponds to a distance of 1.55 kpc. Thus, it would be a stellar source. Abundances of stellar sources are typically subsolar (0.3–0.5 solar, e.g., Güdel et al. 1999; Baskill et al.

Table 3. Best-fitting parameters for the hard source.

	Value		
Parameter	power law	apec	
$N_{\rm H}~({\rm cm}^{-2})$ $\Gamma/kT_{\rm e}~({\rm keV})$ Abundance $F{\rm lux}^*$	$<3 \times 10^{21}$ $1.7^{+0.4}_{-0.2}$ $ 3.4 \times 10^{-13}$	$<2 \times 10^{21}$ $6.3^{+3.8}_{-2.1}$ 0.3 (fixed) 3.2×10^{-13}	
$\chi^2/\text{d.o.f.}$	31.7/28	32.2/28	

 $^{^*}N_{\rm H}\text{-}{\rm corrected}$ energy flux in the 2–10 keV band. The units are erg s $^{-1}$ cm $^{-2}$.

2005). Thus, we assumed the abundances to be 0.3 solar. The best-fitting parameters are listed in table 3.

The observed energy flux is converted into a luminosity of $(0.9-1.0) \times 10^{32} \, \mathrm{erg \, s^{-1}}$. The hard spectrum with Γ of 1.7 (power law) or $kT_{\rm e}$ of 6.3 keV (apec) and the derived luminosity suggest that the hard source is likely to be a cataclysmic variable (e.g., Ezuka & Ishida 1999; Nobukawa et al. 2016).

In order to check for time variation, we made a light curve. No significant variation was found during the observation.

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