

ON COMPACT ASTHENO-KÄHLER MANIFOLDS

BY

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Abstract. We prove that every compact balanced astheno-Kähler manifold is Kähler, and that there exists an astheno-Kähler structure on the product of certain compact normal almost contact metric manifolds.

1. Introduction. A complex m -dimensional Hermitian manifold M endowed with the Kähler form Ω is called an *astheno-Kähler manifold* if $\Omega^{m-2} = \Omega \wedge \dots \wedge \Omega$ ($m - 2$ times) is pluriharmonic, that is, $\partial\bar{\partial}\Omega^{m-2} = 0$, where ∂ and $\bar{\partial}$ are the complex exterior differentials (cf. [7], [9]). S.-T. Yau says in Open Problem 93 of [13] that such a manifold seems to be particularly interesting for many analytic arguments to be useful. For example, it is known that every holomorphic 1-form on a compact astheno-Kähler manifold is closed. So a compact complex parallelizable manifold cannot be astheno-Kähler unless it is a complex torus, because over such a manifold, there exist, by definition, m linearly independent global holomorphic 1-forms (cf. [15]). On the other hand, it is well known (Boothby [3]) that a complex parallelizable manifold has a natural Hermitian-flat metric, and the existence of a Hermitian-flat metric is a somewhat weaker property than complex parallelizability. Li, Yau, and Zheng [9] conjecture that compact non-Kähler Hermitian-flat manifolds or similarity Hopf manifolds of complex dimension ≥ 3 do not admit any astheno-Kähler metrics.

In this paper, we prove the following theorem.

THEOREM 1.1. *Every compact balanced astheno-Kähler manifold is Kähler.*

A Hermitian manifold is said to be *balanced* if the torsion 1-form of its Hermitian connection vanishes everywhere. As a corollary, since a compact Hermitian-flat manifold is balanced, we have

COROLLARY 1.1. *Every compact Hermitian-flat astheno-Kähler manifold is Kähler.*

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The only known examples of compact astheno-Kähler manifolds are trivial ones (cf. [9]). It is also known (cf. [12]) that any product of normal almost contact manifolds is a complex manifold. Another purpose of this paper is to prove that there exists a non-trivial astheno-Kähler structure on the product of certain compact normal almost contact metric manifolds. Consequently, by means of the result of the second author [14], we also know that $S^3 \times S^3$ admits many astheno-Kähler structures.

Throughout this paper, we always assume the differentiability of class C^∞ , and manifolds to be connected and without boundary.

2. Hermitian connections and curvatures. Let M be a complex manifold of complex dimension $m \geq 3$ with the complex structure J . A Hermitian metric g on M is a Riemannian metric such that $g(JX, JY) = g(X, Y)$ for all vector fields X, Y on M . The triple (M, J, g) is called a Hermitian manifold. The Kähler form Ω of (M, J, g) is defined by $\Omega(X, Y) = g(X, JY)$ for all vector fields X, Y on M . It is well known (cf. [5]) that every Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) admits a unique linear connection D such that $DJ = 0$, $Dg = 0$, and the torsion tensor field T satisfies $T(JX, Y) = JT(X, Y)$ for all vector fields X, Y on M . This connection D is called the Hermitian connection of (M, J, g) . The curvature tensor field H of the Hermitian connection D , called the Hermitian curvature tensor field, is defined by

$$H(X, Y) = [D_X, D_Y] - D_{[X, Y]}$$

for all vector fields X, Y on M .

LEMMA 2.1 (cf. [11]). *The Hermitian curvature tensor field H satisfies the following equations: For all vector fields X, Y, Z, W on M ,*

$$\begin{aligned} g(H(X, Y)Z, W) &= -g(H(Y, X)Z, W) = -g(H(X, Y)W, Z), \\ H(JX, JY)Z &= H(X, Y)Z, \quad H(X, Y)JZ = JH(X, Y)Z, \end{aligned}$$

(first Bianchi's identity)

$$\mathbf{Cyc}_{X, Y, Z}[H(X, Y)Z] = \mathbf{Cyc}_{X, Y, Z}[T(T(X, Y), Z) + (D_X T)(Y, Z)],$$

where $\mathbf{Cyc}_{X, Y, Z}$ denotes the cyclic sum over X, Y , and Z .

A Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) is said to be Hermitian-flat if the Hermitian curvature tensor field H vanishes everywhere on M .

We define three tensor fields S_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$) which are analogous to the Ricci tensor field in Kähler geometry:

$$\begin{aligned} S_1(X, Y) &= \frac{1}{2} \text{trace}[Z \mapsto H(X, JY)JZ], \\ S_2(X, Y) &= \frac{1}{2} g(\text{trace } H^*(X), Y), \\ S_3(X, Y) &= \frac{1}{2} \text{trace}[Z \mapsto H(Z, X)Y + H(Z, Y)X] \end{aligned}$$

for all vector fields X, Y on M , where $H^*(X) : (Z, W) \rightarrow H(Z, JW)JX$. Then, by Lemma 2.1, we have

LEMMA 2.2 (cf. [11]). *The Ricci-type tensor fields S_i ($i = 1, 2, 3$) defined above are symmetric and compatible with J , i.e.,*

$$S_i(X, Y) = S_i(Y, X), \quad S_i(JX, JY) = S_i(X, Y)$$

for all vector fields X, Y on M .

We moreover define two scalar curvatures s and \widehat{s} which are analogous to the scalar curvature in Kähler geometry:

$$s = \text{trace } S_1 = \text{trace } S_2, \quad \widehat{s} = \text{trace } S_3.$$

On a compact Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) , it is well known (Gauduchon [5]) that

$$(2.1) \quad s - \widehat{s} = \delta\tau + \|\tau\|^2,$$

where τ denotes the torsion 1-form defined by $\tau(X) = \text{trace}[Y \mapsto T(X, Y)]$, δ the codifferential, i.e., $\delta = - * d *$, and $\|\tau\|$ the g -norm of τ .

3. Proof of Theorem 1.1. We shall use the following real differential operator d^c (cf. [1]) to judge whether the manifolds are astheno-Kähler. Extend the complex structure J to p -forms φ on M as follows:

$$J\varphi = \varphi \quad \text{for } p = 0,$$

$$J\varphi(X_1, \dots, X_p) = (-1)^r \varphi(JX_1, \dots, JX_p) \quad \text{for } p > 0,$$

where X_1, \dots, X_p are vector fields on M . Then the operator d^c is given by

$$d^c \varphi = -J^{-1}dJ\varphi = (-1)^p JdJ\varphi \quad \text{for any } p\text{-form } \varphi \text{ on } M.$$

It is well known that $dd^c = 2\sqrt{-1} \partial\bar{\partial}$. Therefore an astheno-Kähler manifold may be defined as follows.

DEFINITION 3.1. A complex m -dimensional Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) endowed with the Kähler form Ω is called an *astheno-Kähler manifold* if $dd^c \Omega^{m-2} = 0$.

With the help of the Kähler form Ω , we have two linear operators L and Λ acting on forms. L is defined by $L\varphi = \Omega \wedge \varphi$ for any form φ , and Λ is the adjoint operator of L with respect to the global scalar product defined on M by $\langle \varphi, \psi \rangle = p! \int_M (\varphi, \psi) v_g$ for any p -forms φ, ψ on M , where (φ, ψ) is the pointwise g -scalar product, and v_g is the volume element of g . Then Λ can be locally written as follows: For any p -form φ on M ,

$$\Lambda\varphi = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{for } p = 0, 1, \\ \frac{p!}{(p-2)!} \sum_{\alpha=1}^{2m} i(e_\alpha)i(Je_\alpha)\varphi & \text{for } p \geq 2, \end{cases}$$

where $i(X)$ denotes the interior product by X , and $\{e_\alpha\}_{\alpha=1}^{2m}$ is a local adapted g -orthonormal frame field of M such that $e_{m+j} = J e_j$ for $j = 1, \dots, m$. For any p -form φ , we have

$$(3.1) \quad \Lambda L\varphi = L\Lambda\varphi + 4(m-p)\varphi.$$

Moreover, we inductively obtain

$$(3.2) \quad \Lambda L^k\varphi = L^k\Lambda\varphi + 4k(m-p-k+1)L^{k-1}\varphi.$$

LEMMA 3.1. *Let r be a positive integer such that $r \leq k$. Then, for any p -form φ on M ,*

$$\Lambda^r L^k\varphi = L^k \Lambda^r\varphi + \sum_{i=1}^r 4^i (i!)^2 \binom{k}{i} \binom{r}{i} \binom{m-p-k+r}{i} L^{k-i} \Lambda^{r-i}\varphi,$$

where $\binom{r}{i}$ is a binomial coefficient.

Proof. This is easily proved by induction on r . ■

In particular, we have, from Lemma 3.1,

$$\Lambda^k L^k\varphi = L^k \Lambda^k\varphi + \sum_{i=1}^k 4^i (i!)^2 \binom{k}{i} \binom{k}{i} \binom{m-p}{i} L^{k-i} \Lambda^{k-i}\varphi.$$

Moreover, we obtain

$$(3.3) \quad \begin{aligned} \Lambda^{k+3} L^k\varphi &= L^k \Lambda^{k+3}\varphi + \sum_{i=1}^{k-1} 4^i (i!)^2 \binom{k}{i} \binom{k+3}{i} \binom{m-p+3}{i} L^{k-i} \Lambda^{k+3-i}\varphi \\ &\quad + 4^{k+3} k! \frac{(k+3)!}{3!} \binom{m-p+3}{k} \Lambda^3\varphi. \end{aligned}$$

Now, if $m > 3$, then

$$(3.4) \quad \begin{aligned} dd^c \Omega^{m-2} &= (m-2)d[d^c \Omega \wedge \Omega^{m-3}] \\ &= (m-2)[dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega^{m-3} - d^c \Omega \wedge d\Omega^{m-3}] \\ &= (m-2)[dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega] \wedge \Omega^{m-4} \\ &= (m-2)L^{m-4}[dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega]. \end{aligned}$$

By (3.3) and the fact that $\Lambda^r [dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega] = 0$ for $r > 3$, we then get

$$(3.5) \quad \begin{aligned} \Lambda^{m-1} dd^c \Omega^{m-2} &= 4^{m-1} \frac{(m-1)!}{3!} (m-2) \Lambda^3 [dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega]. \end{aligned}$$

On the other hand, by the direct calculation using the Hermitian connection D , we have the following lemma.

LEMMA 3.2. *On a Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) ,*

$$(3.6) \quad d\Omega(X, Y, Z) = \frac{1}{3} \mathbf{Cyc}_{X,Y,Z}[\Omega(T(X, Y), Z)],$$

$$(3.7) \quad d^c\Omega(X, Y, Z) = -\frac{1}{3} \mathbf{Cyc}_{X,Y,Z}[g(T(X, Y), Z)],$$

$$(3.8) \quad dd^c\Omega(X, Y, Z, W) = -\frac{1}{6} \mathbf{Cyc}_{X,Y,Z}[g(T(X, Y), T(Z, W)) + g(H(X, Y)Z, W) + g(H(Z, W)X, Y)]$$

for all vector fields X, Y, Z, W on M .

Then, by means of Lemmas 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, and (2.1), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \Lambda^3(dd^c\Omega \wedge \Omega) &= 96(m-2)[2(\delta\tau + \|\tau\|^2) - \|T\|^2], \\ \Lambda^3(d\Omega \wedge d^c\Omega) &= 96[\|T\|^2 - 2\|\tau\|^2]. \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, by (3.5), we conclude

LEMMA 3.3. *On a Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) of $\dim_{\mathbb{C}} M = m > 3$, $\Lambda^{m-1} dd^c\Omega^{m-2} = 4^{m-3}(m-1)!(m-2)[2(m-2)\delta\tau + 2\|\tau\|^2 - \|T\|^2]$.*

Similarly, we have

LEMMA 3.4. *On a Hermitian manifold (M, J, g) of $\dim_{\mathbb{C}} M = m = 3$, $\Lambda^2 dd^c\Omega^{m-2} = \Lambda^2 dd^c\Omega = 8[2(\delta\tau + \|\tau\|^2) - \|T\|]$.*

Let (M, J, g) be a compact Hermitian manifold of complex dimension $m \geq 3$. Integrate the equality in Lemma 3.3 or Lemma 3.4 under the conditions $\tau = 0$ and $dd^c\Omega^{m-2} = 0$. Then we conclude that $T = 0$. This completes the proof of Theorem 1.1.

4. Examples of compact astheno-Kähler manifolds. Let M be a $(2n+1)$ -dimensional almost contact manifold with the structure tensor fields (ϕ, ξ, η) , that is, ϕ is a $(1, 1)$ -tensor field, η a 1-form, and ξ a vector field on M such that

$$\eta(\xi) = 1, \quad \phi^2 = -I + \eta \otimes \xi,$$

where I denotes the identity transformation of the tangent spaces and $n \geq 1$. An almost contact structure (ϕ, ξ, η) is said to be *normal* (cf. [2]) if $[\phi, \phi] + 2d\eta \otimes \xi = 0$, where $[\phi, \phi]$ denotes the Nijenhuis tensor field of ϕ , i.e., $[\phi, \phi](X, Y) = [\phi X, \phi Y] + \phi^2[X, Y] - \phi[X, \phi Y] - \phi[\phi X, Y]$ for all vector fields X, Y on M . A Riemannian metric g on M is said to be *compatible* if

$$g(\phi X, \phi Y) = g(X, Y) - \eta(X)\eta(Y)$$

for any vector fields X, Y on M . An almost contact manifold M with a compatible Riemannian metric g is said to have an *almost contact metric structure* (ϕ, ξ, η, g) . It is known that there always exists an almost contact metric structure on an almost contact manifold. The *fundamental 2-form* Φ

on an almost contact metric manifold M is defined by

$$\bar{\Phi}(X, Y) = g(X, \phi Y)$$

for all vector fields X, Y on M . Then we have $\eta \wedge \bar{\Phi}^n \neq 0$. If $\bar{\Phi} = d\eta$, then M is, by definition, a *contact manifold*. Such an almost contact metric structure is called a *contact metric structure*. Moreover, if a contact metric structure is normal, then it is called a *Sasakian structure*. It is well known (cf. [2]) that there is the standard Sasakian structure on the unit sphere S^{2n+1} in \mathbb{C}^{n+1} . On the other hand, if $d\bar{\Phi} = 0$ and $d\eta = 0$, then M is said to have an *almost cosymplectic structure*. Moreover, if an almost cosymplectic structure is normal, then it is called a *cosymplectic structure*. If N is a compact Kähler manifold, then $N \times S^1$ is the trivial example of compact cosymplectic manifolds. The non-trivial examples of compact cosymplectic manifolds are found in [4] and [10].

Let M_i ($i = 1, 2$) be a $(2m_i + 1)$ -dimensional compact normal almost contact metric manifold with the structure tensor fields (ϕ_i, ξ_i, η_i) . On the product manifold $M = M_1 \times M_2$, we consider an almost complex structure J defined by

$$J = \phi_1 - \eta_2 \otimes \xi_1 + \phi_2 + \eta_1 \otimes \xi_2 \quad (\text{see [12]}).$$

This almost complex structure J is integrable since each almost contact structure is normal. Thus M endowed with J is a compact complex manifold of complex dimension $m = m_1 + m_2 + 1$. Moreover, if g_i is the compatible Riemannian metric on M_i for each $i = 1, 2$, then the Riemannian product metric $g = g_1 + g_2$ on M is compatible with J , that is, g is a Hermitian metric on M . Then its Kähler form Ω is given by

$$(4.1) \quad \Omega = \bar{\Phi}_1 + \bar{\Phi}_2 - 2\eta_1 \wedge \eta_2,$$

where $\bar{\Phi}_i$ denotes the fundamental 2-form on M_i for each $i = 1, 2$.

Now, in the case where M_1 and M_2 are more special, we investigate the Hermitian structure (4.1) of $M = M_1 \times M_2$.

THEOREM 4.1. *Let (M_i, g_i) be a 3-dimensional compact Sasakian manifold for each $i = 1, 2$. Then the product manifold $M = M_1 \times M_2$ with the Hermitian structure (4.1) is astheno-Kähler.*

Proof. Since M_1 and M_2 are both Sasakian, we have

$$d\Omega = -2(\bar{\Phi}_1 \wedge \eta_2 - \bar{\Phi}_2 \wedge \eta_1),$$

and

$$d^c\Omega = Jd\Omega = -2(J\bar{\Phi}_1 \wedge J\eta_2 - J\bar{\Phi}_2 \wedge J\eta_1) = 2(\bar{\Phi}_1 \wedge \eta_1 + \bar{\Phi}_2 \wedge \eta_2).$$

Here we used the fact that Ω and $\bar{\Phi}_i$ are J -invariant, and $J\eta_1 = \eta_2$, $J\eta_2 = -\eta_1$. Thus we get

$$dd^c\Omega = 2(\bar{\Phi}_1^2 + \bar{\Phi}_2^2).$$

Since $\dim_{\mathbb{C}} M = m = 3$, i.e., $\dim M_i = m_i = 1$ for each $i = 1, 2$, $\Phi_i^2 = 0$ on M_i , and hence we obtain

$$dd^c \Omega^{m-2} = dd^c \Omega = 2(\Phi_1^2 + \Phi_2^2) = 0 \quad \text{on } M.$$

Therefore we conclude that the Hermitian structure (4.1) on M is astheno-Kähler. ■

REMARK 4.1. Let (M_i, g_i) be a Sasakian manifold for each $i = 1, 2$. If $\dim_{\mathbb{C}} M = m > 3$, then

$$\begin{aligned} dd^c \Omega^{m-2} &= (m-2)[dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega] \wedge \Omega^{m-4} \\ &= 2(m-2)(\Phi_1^2 + \Phi_2^2) \wedge [\Phi_1 + \Phi_2 + 2(m-4)\eta_1 \wedge \eta_2] \wedge \Omega^{m-4} \\ &= 2(m-2)(\Phi_1^2 + \Phi_2^2) \wedge (\Phi_1 + \Phi_2)^{m-3} \\ &= 2(m-2) \sum_{k=0}^{m-1} C(m, k) \Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} \wedge \Phi_2^k, \end{aligned}$$

where $C(m, k)$ are given as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} C(m, 0) &= C(m, m-1) = 0, \quad C(m, 1) = C(m, m-2) = m-3, \\ C(m, k) &= \binom{m-3}{k} + \binom{m-3}{k-2} \quad \text{for } 2 \leq k \leq m-3. \end{aligned}$$

Since $\Phi_i^p = 0$ on M_i for $p > m_i$, $\Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} = 0$ on M_1 if $0 \leq k < m_2$, and $\Phi_2^k = 0$ on M_2 if $m_2 < k \leq m-1$. Thus

$$\Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} \wedge \Phi_2^k = 0 \quad \text{on } M \text{ if } k \neq m_2,$$

and hence we obtain

$$dd^c \Omega^{m-2} = 2(m-2)C(m, m_2)\Phi_1^{m_1} \wedge \Phi_2^{m_2} \neq 0 \quad \text{on } M.$$

Therefore if $m > 3$, then the Hermitian structure (4.1) on M is not astheno-Kähler.

THEOREM 4.2. *Let (M_1, g_1) be a 3-dimensional compact Sasakian manifold, and (M_2, g_2) a compact cosymplectic manifold of dimension ≥ 3 . Then the product manifold $M = M_1 \times M_2$ with the Hermitian structure (4.1) is astheno-Kähler.*

Proof. Since M_1 is Sasakian and M_2 cosymplectic, we have

$$d\Omega = -2\Phi_1 \wedge \eta_2 \quad \text{and} \quad d^c \Omega = 2\Phi_1 \wedge \eta_1.$$

Thus we get

$$dd^c \Omega = 2\Phi_1^2.$$

Since $m_1 = 1$, $\Phi_1^2 = 0$ on M_1 , that is, $dd^c \Omega = 0$ and $d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega = 0$ on M , and hence we obtain

$$dd^c \Omega \wedge \Omega + (m-3)d\Omega \wedge d^c \Omega = 0.$$

Therefore, by (3.4), we conclude that the Hermitian structure (4.1) on M is astheno-Kähler. ■

REMARK 4.2. Let (M_1, g_1) be a Sasakian manifold of dimension > 3 , and (M_2, g_2) a cosymplectic manifold. Then

$$\begin{aligned} dd^c \Omega^{m-2} &= 2(m-2)\Phi_1^2 \wedge (\Phi_1 + \Phi_2)^{m-3} \\ &= 2(m-2) \sum_{k=0}^{m-3} \binom{m-3}{k} \Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} \wedge \Phi_2^k. \end{aligned}$$

Since $m-3 \geq m_2$, $\Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} = 0$ on M_1 if $0 \leq k < m_2$, and $\Phi_2^k = 0$ on M_2 if $m_2 < k \leq m-3$. Thus

$$\Phi_1^{(m-1)-k} \wedge \Phi_2^k = 0 \quad \text{on } M \text{ if } k \neq m_2,$$

and hence we obtain

$$dd^c \Omega^{m-2} = 2(m-2) \binom{m-3}{m_2} \Phi_1^{m_1} \wedge \Phi_2^{m_2} \neq 0 \quad \text{on } M.$$

Therefore if $m_1 > 1$, then the Hermitian structure (4.1) on M is not astheno-Kähler.

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