

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL FOR “SYMMETRY-PROTECTED SCATTERING IN NON-HERMITIAN
LINEAR SYSTEMS”

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A: Proof of the constraints on the scattering coefficients for discrete symmetries

Symmetric scattering coefficients.—The transmission and reflection coefficients for the input-output in the leads m and n are

$$t_L = \frac{\Delta_{nm}^{-1} J^{-1} (e^{ik} - e^{-ik})}{(J^{-1} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1} e^{ik})(J^{-1} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1} e^{ik}) - \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} e^{2ik}}, \quad (1)$$

$$r_L = \frac{\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} - (J^{-1} e^{ik} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1})(J^{-1} e^{-ik} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1})}{(J^{-1} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1} e^{ik})(J^{-1} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1} e^{ik}) - \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} e^{2ik}}. \quad (2)$$

$$t_R = \frac{\Delta_{mn}^{-1} J^{-1} (e^{ik} - e^{-ik})}{(J^{-1} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1} e^{ik})(J^{-1} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1} e^{ik}) - \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} e^{2ik}}, \quad (3)$$

$$r_R = \frac{\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} - (J^{-1} e^{ik} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1})(J^{-1} e^{-ik} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1})}{(J^{-1} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1} e^{ik})(J^{-1} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1} e^{ik}) - \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} e^{2ik}}, \quad (4)$$

where $\Delta = H_c + (\omega_0 - \omega) \mathbf{1} = H_c - (2J \cos k) \mathbf{1}$, Δ^{-1} indicates the inverse of Δ , and Δ_{mn}^{-1} indicates the element on the m -th row and the n -th column of Δ^{-1} .

It is obvious that

$$t_L = t_R \text{ for } \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = \Delta_{mn}^{-1}, \quad (5)$$

$$r_L = r_R \text{ for } \Delta_{mm}^{-1} = \Delta_{nn}^{-1}. \quad (6)$$

Alternatively,

$$|t_L|^2 = |t_R|^2 \text{ for } |\Delta_{nm}^{-1}| = |\Delta_{mn}^{-1}|. \quad (7)$$

The difference between the numerators of $|r_L|^2$ and $|r_R|^2$ is given by

$$\begin{aligned} & |\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} - (J^{-1} e^{ik} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1})(J^{-1} e^{-ik} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1})|^2 - |\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1} - (J^{-1} e^{ik} + \Delta_{nn}^{-1})(J^{-1} e^{-ik} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1})|^2 \\ &= 2J^{-2} i \sin(2k) (\Delta_{nn}^{-1} \Delta_{mm}^{-1*} - \Delta_{mm}^{-1} \Delta_{nn}^{-1*}) \\ &+ 2J^{-1} i \sin k [(J^{-2} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1*} \Delta_{nn}^{-1*} - \Delta_{nn}^{-1*} \Delta_{mm}^{-1*}) (\Delta_{nn}^{-1} - \Delta_{mm}^{-1}) - (J^{-2} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1} \Delta_{nn}^{-1} - \Delta_{nn}^{-1} \Delta_{mm}^{-1}) (\Delta_{nn}^{-1*} - \Delta_{mm}^{-1*})]. \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Thus, we have $|r_L|^2 = |r_R|^2$ for real Δ_{mm}^{-1} , Δ_{nn}^{-1} , and $\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1}$. These are the conclusions of Eqs. (9) and (10) in the main text. Notably, the accidental symmetric reflection $|r_L|^2 = |r_R|^2$ occurs if the conditions $J^{-2} + \Delta_{mm}^{-1*} \Delta_{nn}^{-1*} - \Delta_{nn}^{-1*} \Delta_{mm}^{-1*} = 0$ and $\Delta_{nn}^{-1} \Delta_{mm}^{-1*} = \Delta_{mm}^{-1} \Delta_{nn}^{-1*}$ are simultaneously satisfied.

Symmetry-protected scattering.—The mapping relations are

$$\mathbf{1} : U_{\mathbf{1}}[\cdots, |m\rangle_c, \cdots, |n\rangle_c, \cdots]^T = [\cdots, |m\rangle_c, \cdots, e^{i\alpha} |n\rangle_c, \cdots]^T, \quad (9)$$

$$\mathcal{I} : U_{\mathcal{I}}[\cdots, |m\rangle_c, \cdots, |n\rangle_c, \cdots]^T = [\cdots, |n\rangle_c, \cdots, e^{i\alpha} |m\rangle_c, \cdots]^T. \quad (10)$$

In the general situation, the phase factor $e^{i\alpha}$ is not necessarily to be 1. The four elements in the unitary operators that relate to the mapping between the connection sites $|m\rangle_c$ and $|n\rangle_c$ are

$$\mathbf{1} : \begin{pmatrix} U_{\mathbf{1},mm} & U_{\mathbf{1},nm} \\ U_{\mathbf{1},mn} & U_{\mathbf{1},nn} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 \\ 0 & e^{i\alpha} \end{pmatrix}, \quad (11)$$

$$\mathcal{I} : \begin{pmatrix} U_{\mathcal{I},mm} & U_{\mathcal{I},nm} \\ U_{\mathcal{I},mn} & U_{\mathcal{I},nn} \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ e^{i\alpha} & 0 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (12)$$

Other relevant elements in the mapping relation are $U_{1,mj} = 0$ and $U_{1,jn} = 0$ for $j \neq m, n$; $U_{\mathcal{I},mj} = 0$ and $U_{\mathcal{I},jn} = 0$ for $j \neq m, n$.

The scattering center with the even-parity C symmetry satisfies $H_c = cH_c^T c^{-1}$. From the definition $\Delta = H_c - (2J \cos k) \mathbf{1}$, we have the relation $\Delta = c\Delta^T c^{-1}$; therefore, we obtain

$$\Delta^{-1} = c(\Delta^{-1})^T c^{-1}. \quad (13)$$

For the C_1 symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} \Delta_{mn}^{-1}, \quad (14)$$

thus, we obtain the symmetric transmission

$$|t_L| = |t_R|. \quad (15)$$

For the $C_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = \Delta_{nn}^{-1}, \quad (16)$$

besides, the $C_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry also demands $e^{i\alpha} = 1$ or $\Delta_{mn}^{-1} = \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = 0$. Thus, in general case we only have the symmetric reflection

$$r_L = r_R. \quad (17)$$

The scattering center with the even-parity K symmetry satisfies $H_c = \mathbb{k}H_c^* \mathbb{k}^{-1}$. Therefore, we obtain the relation $\Delta = \mathbb{k}\Delta^* \mathbb{k}^{-1}$; and consequently,

$$\Delta^{-1} = \mathbb{k}(\Delta^{-1})^* \mathbb{k}^{-1}. \quad (18)$$

For the K_1 symmetry, we obtain

$$\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = (\Delta_{mm}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{nn}^{-1} = (\Delta_{nn}^{-1})^*; \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} (\Delta_{nm}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{mn}^{-1} = e^{-i\alpha} (\Delta_{mn}^{-1})^*, \quad (19)$$

thus, Δ_{mm}^{-1} , Δ_{nn}^{-1} , and $\Delta_{mn}^{-1} \Delta_{nm}^{-1}$ are all real numbers; and we have symmetric reflection

$$|r_L| = |r_R|. \quad (20)$$

For the $K_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry, we obtain

$$\Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} (\Delta_{mn}^{-1})^*, \quad (21)$$

thus, we have symmetric transmission

$$|t_L| = |t_R|. \quad (22)$$

we also have $\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = (\Delta_{nn}^{-1})^*$, which does not lead to a symmetric relation on the scattering coefficients.

The scattering center with the even-parity Q symmetry satisfies $H_c = qH_c^\dagger q^{-1}$. Therefore, we obtain $\Delta = q\Delta^\dagger q^{-1}$; and consequently

$$\Delta^{-1} = q(\Delta^{-1})^\dagger q^{-1}. \quad (23)$$

For the Q_1 symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = (\Delta_{mm}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{nn}^{-1} = (\Delta_{nn}^{-1})^*; \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} (\Delta_{mn}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{mn}^{-1} = e^{-i\alpha} (\Delta_{nm}^{-1})^*, \quad (24)$$

the Q_1 symmetry also requires $e^{2i\alpha} = 1$. From $\Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} (\Delta_{mn}^{-1})^*$, we obtain $|t_L| = |t_R|$. Notice that Δ_{mm}^{-1} , Δ_{nn}^{-1} , and $\Delta_{mn}^{-1}\Delta_{nm}^{-1}$ are all real numbers; thus, we have both the symmetric transmission and reflection

$$|t_L| = |t_R|, |r_L| = |r_R|. \quad (25)$$

For the $Q_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = (\Delta_{nn}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha} (\Delta_{nm}^{-1})^*, \Delta_{mn}^{-1} = e^{-i\alpha} (\Delta_{mn}^{-1})^*. \quad (26)$$

These constraints are insufficient to result in the symmetric transmission as well as the symmetric reflection.

The scattering center with the even-parity P symmetry satisfies $H_c = pH_cp^{-1}$; therefore, we obtain $\Delta = p\Delta p^{-1}$ and

$$\Delta^{-1} = p(\Delta^{-1})p^{-1}. \quad (27)$$

For the P_1 symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha}\Delta_{nm}^{-1}, \Delta_{mn}^{-1} = e^{-i\alpha}\Delta_{mn}^{-1}. \quad (28)$$

These constraints are insufficient to result in the symmetric transmission as well as the symmetric reflection.

For the $P_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry, we have

$$\Delta_{mm}^{-1} = \Delta_{nn}^{-1}, \Delta_{nm}^{-1} = e^{i\alpha}\Delta_{mn}^{-1}. \quad (29)$$

Thus, we have both the symmetric transmission and reflection

$$|t_L| = |t_R|, r_L = r_R. \quad (30)$$

These conclusions are summarized in Supplemental Table I and give the symmetric constraints on the scattering coefficients listed in Table I of the main text.

Supplemental Table I. Symmetry-protected constraints on the transmission and reflection coefficients.

Symmetry	C_1	$C_{\mathcal{I}}$	K_1	$K_{\mathcal{I}}$	Q_1	$P_{\mathcal{I}}$	$Q_{\mathcal{I}}, P_1$
Constraint	$ t_L = t_R $	$r_L = r_R$	$ r_L = r_R $	$ t_L = t_R $	$ t_L = t_R , r_L = r_R $	$ t_L = t_R , r_L = r_R$	None

These conclusions are straightforwardly applicable to explain the many intriguing symmetric/asymmetric scattering phenomena reported in the literatures. For example, the C_1 symmetry protected symmetric transmission [1, 2]; the $C_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry protected symmetric reflection [3–9]; the K_1 symmetry protected symmetric reflection [10, 11]; the $K_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry protected symmetric transmission [11–61]; the Q_1 symmetry protected symmetric transmission and reflection [62, 63]; and the $P_{\mathcal{I}}$ symmetry protected symmetric transmission and reflection [64–71]. Without the protection of these symmetries, both the transmission and reflection are asymmetric [8, 72, 73].

B: Details for the light scattering in the three-coupled-resonator scattering center

The scattering center of the three coupled resonators is schematically illustrated in the main text Fig. 2(a). The scattering center encloses a synthetic magnetic flux ϕ induced by the Peierls phase factor in the coupling. We now analyze the properties of the scattering center through the two-port scattering dynamics. The leads 1 and 3 are under consideration; the lead 2 is disconnected from the scattering center.

For the case $\{V_1, V_2, V_3\} = \{i\gamma, -i\gamma, 0\}$, the Hamiltonian H_c is not symmetry-protected. The scattering coefficients are obtained in the form of

$$t_L = \frac{J(e^{2ik} - 1)(Je^{i\phi} + i\gamma + 2J \cos k)}{(2 - e^{-2ik} + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{ik} - \gamma^2}, \quad (31)$$

$$r_L = -\frac{(1 + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{-ik} - \gamma^2}{(2 - e^{-2ik} + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{ik} - \gamma^2}, \quad (32)$$

$$t_R = \frac{Je^{-i\phi}(e^{2ik} - 1)(J + i\gamma e^{i\phi} + 2Je^{i\phi} \cos k)}{(2 - e^{-2ik} + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{ik} - \gamma^2}, \quad (33)$$

$$r_R = -\frac{(1 + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{3ik} - \gamma^2 e^{2ik}}{(2 - e^{-2ik} + e^{2ik} + e^{i(k-\phi)} + e^{i(k+\phi)})J^2 + iJ\gamma e^{ik} - \gamma^2}. \quad (34)$$

The scattering coefficients are depicted in Figs. 2(b) and 2(c) of the main text; and they diverge at $J = \gamma/2$ and $\phi = \pm\pi/2$ for the resonant inputs at the momentum $k = -\pi/2$. In the general case, the transmission and reflection are asymmetric; these are reflected from the four elements of the inverse matrix Δ^{-1}

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Delta_{mm}^{-1} & \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \\ \Delta_{nm}^{-1} & \Delta_{nn}^{-1} \end{pmatrix} = \frac{J^2}{\det \Delta} \begin{pmatrix} 1 + e^{2ik} + e^{-2ik} + i(\gamma/J)(e^{ik} + e^{-ik}) & e^{ik} + e^{-ik} + e^{-i\phi} + i(\gamma/J) \\ e^{ik} + e^{-ik} + e^{i\phi} + i(\gamma/J) & 1 + e^{2ik} + e^{-2ik} + (\gamma/J)^2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (35)$$

where $\Delta = H_c - (2J \cos k) \mathbf{1}$. The determinant is $\det \Delta = J^3 [e^{-i\phi} + e^{i\phi} - e^{-3ik} - e^{3ik} - (\gamma^2/J^2)(e^{-ik} + e^{ik})]$. Then, we obtain the contrast between the transmission and reflection of the inputs from the forward and backward directions for the resonant incidence with the momentum $k = -\pi/2$

$$\frac{t_R}{t_L} = \frac{e^{-i\phi} + i\gamma/J}{e^{i\phi} + i\gamma/J}, \quad \frac{r_R}{r_L} = \frac{2 \cos \phi - i\gamma/J + i\gamma^2/J^2}{2 \cos \phi - i\gamma/J - i\gamma^2/J^2}. \quad (36)$$

At $\gamma = J$, the special cases of $\phi = -\pi/2$ for a unidirectional transmissionless $t_L = 0, r_L = 1; t_R = -2i, r_R = 0$ and $\phi = \pi/2$ for a unidirectional absorption $t_L = -2i, r_L = 1; t_R = 0, r_R = 0$ are shown in the main text Fig. 3.

C: Non-Hermitian three-coupled-resonator scattering center with dissipative coupling

In the coupled mode theory, the equations of motion for the three-site scattering center with dissipative coupling $-i\kappa$ are given by

$$i\dot{\phi}_c^k(1) = \omega_0\phi_c^k(1) - i\kappa\phi_c^k(2) + J\phi_c^k(3) + J\phi_1^k(-1), \quad (37)$$

$$i\dot{\phi}_c^k(2) = \omega_0\phi_c^k(2) - i\kappa\phi_c^k(1) + Je^{-i\phi}\phi_c^k(3), \quad (38)$$

$$i\dot{\phi}_c^k(3) = \omega_0\phi_c^k(3) + J\phi_c^k(1) + Je^{i\phi}\phi_c^k(2) + J\phi_3^k(1), \quad (39)$$

where $\phi_1^k(-1)$ and $\phi_3^k(1)$ are the wavefunctions of the sites on the leads 1 and 3 that are connected with the scattering center sites 1 and 3, respectively. The dissipative coupling is reciprocal and is directly induced by the dissipation in the link resonator between the primary resonators 1 and 2 [74]. The link resonator and the primary resonators are on resonant. The effective dissipative coupling strength $\kappa = \kappa_0^2/\gamma$ is inversely proportional to the link resonator dissipation γ and quadratically proportional to the coupling strength between the link resonator and the primary resonators κ_0 [75, 76]. The dissipative coupling has also been experimentally realized in many anti-parity-time symmetric systems [77–80].

The scattering center is described by the Hamiltonian

$$H_c = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & -i\kappa & J \\ -i\kappa & 0 & Je^{-i\phi} \\ J & Je^{i\phi} & 0 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (40)$$

the scattering properties of which are not symmetry-protected.

The contrast between the transmission and reflection from opposite incident directions are calculated as follows. We obtain the four elements of the inverse matrix Δ^{-1} in the form of

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Delta_{mm}^{-1} & \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \\ \Delta_{nm}^{-1} & \Delta_{nn}^{-1} \end{pmatrix} = \frac{J^2}{\det \Delta} \begin{pmatrix} e^{2ik} + 1 + e^{-2ik} & e^{ik} + e^{-ik} - i(\kappa/J)e^{-i\phi} \\ e^{ik} + e^{-ik} - i(\kappa/J)e^{i\phi} & e^{2ik} + 2 + e^{-2ik} + (\kappa/J)^2 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (41)$$

In general case, the transmission and reflection are asymmetric.

However, for the resonant incidence with the momentum $k = -\pi/2$, the transmission is symmetric $|t_L| = |t_R|$ because of $|\Delta_{nm}^{-1}| = |\Delta_{mn}^{-1}|$; but the reflection is asymmetric. To break the reciprocity at $k = -\pi/2$, the on-site terms $\{V_1, V_2, V_3\}$ of the scattering center are helpful

$$H_c = \begin{pmatrix} V_1 & -i\kappa & J \\ -i\kappa & V_2 & J e^{-i\phi} \\ J & J e^{i\phi} & V_3 \end{pmatrix}. \quad (42)$$

For the resonant incidence $k = -\pi/2$, the four elements of the inverse matrix Δ^{-1} are in the form of

$$\begin{pmatrix} \Delta_{mm}^{-1} & \Delta_{mn}^{-1} \\ \Delta_{nm}^{-1} & \Delta_{nn}^{-1} \end{pmatrix} = \frac{1}{\det \Delta} \begin{pmatrix} V_2 V_3 - J^2 & -J V_2 - i J \kappa e^{-i\phi} \\ -J V_2 - i J \kappa e^{i\phi} & V_1 V_2 + \kappa^2 \end{pmatrix}, \quad (43)$$

where the determinant $D \equiv \det \Delta = V_1 V_2 V_3 - J^2 V_1 - J^2 V_2 + \kappa^2 V_3 - i J^2 \kappa (e^{-i\phi} + e^{i\phi})$.

At $\phi = \pm\pi/2$, the transmission is asymmetric for the real V_2 ; the transmission is symmetric for the imaginary V_2 . For the real $V_{1,2,3}$, the reflection is symmetric; otherwise, the reflection is asymmetric.

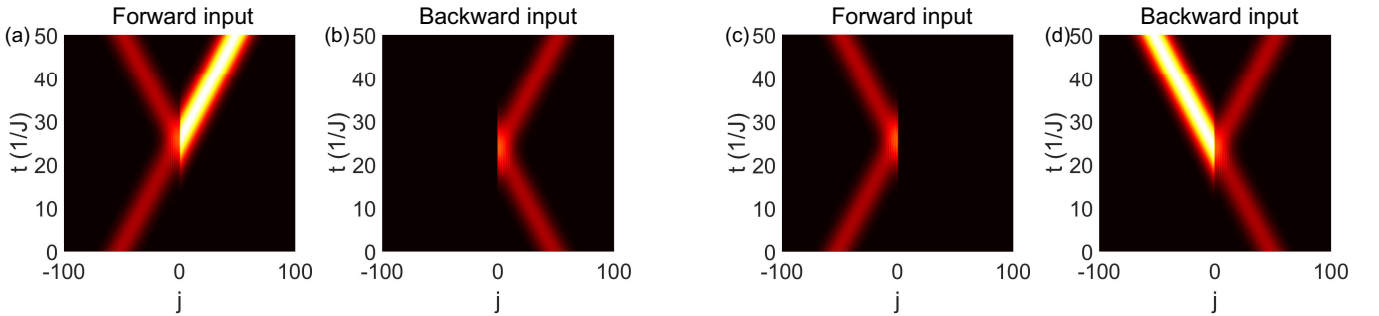
We take $V_1 = V_3 = 0$ as an illustration. The scattering coefficients for the momentum $k = -\pi/2$ are obtained in the form of

$$t_L = \frac{J(e^{2ik} - 1)(-iV_2 + \kappa e^{i\phi} + 2iJ \cos k)}{iJ^2 e^{-2ik}(e^{4ik} + e^{2ik} - 1) + J(iV_2 e^{-ik} - iV_2 e^{ik} + \kappa e^{i(k-\phi)} + \kappa e^{i(k+\phi)}) - i\kappa^2}, \quad (44)$$

$$r_L = -\frac{e^{-i\phi}(e^{i(k+\phi)}J - i\kappa)(iJ e^{ik} + \kappa e^{i\phi})}{iJ^2 e^{-2ik}(e^{4ik} + e^{2ik} - 1) + J(iV_2 e^{-ik} - iV_2 e^{ik} + \kappa e^{i(k-\phi)} + \kappa e^{i(k+\phi)}) - i\kappa^2}, \quad (45)$$

$$t_R = \frac{iJ e^{-i\phi}(e^{2ik} - 1)(-V_2 e^{i\phi} - i\kappa + 2J e^{i\phi} \cos k)}{iJ^2 e^{-2ik}(e^{4ik} + e^{2ik} - 1) + J(iV_2 e^{-ik} - iV_2 e^{ik} + \kappa e^{i(k-\phi)} + \kappa e^{i(k+\phi)}) - i\kappa^2}, \quad (46)$$

$$r_R = -\frac{e^{-i\phi}(e^{i(k+\phi)}\kappa + iJ)(J e^{i\phi} - i\kappa e^{ik})}{iJ^2 e^{-2ik}(e^{4ik} + e^{2ik} - 1) + J(iV_2 e^{-ik} - iV_2 e^{ik} + \kappa e^{i(k-\phi)} + \kappa e^{i(k+\phi)}) - i\kappa^2}. \quad (47)$$



Supplemental Figure 1. Numerical simulation of the asymmetric transmission in the three-site center with dissipative coupling [Eq. (42)]. The incidences are Gaussian wave packet with the momentum $k = -\pi/2$ in the simulations. The excitation intensity is depicted. (a) Forward and (b) backward incidence for $\phi = -\pi/2$. $|t_L|^2 = 4$, $|r_L|^2 = 1$; $|t_R|^2 = 0$, $|r_R|^2 = 1$. (c) Forward and (d) backward incidence for $\phi = \pi/2$. $|t_L|^2 = 0$, $|r_L|^2 = 1$; $|t_R|^2 = 4$, $|r_R|^2 = 1$. The dissipative coupling is $\kappa = J = 1$ and the on-site terms are $\{V_1, V_2, V_3\} = \{0, J, 0\}$. The incident frequency is ω_0 .

Both the scattering coefficients t and r diverge at $\phi = \pm \arccos(J^2 - \kappa^2)^{-1/2}$ and $V_2 = 0$ when the resonant momentum $k = -\pi/2$. For the real $V_2 = J$, we have the scattering coefficients $t_L = -2i, r_L = -i; t_R = 0, r_R = i$ at $\phi = -\pi/2$; and we have the scattering coefficients $t_L = 0, r_L = -i; t_R = -2i, r_R = i$ at $\phi = \pi/2$. The numerical simulations are shown in Supplementary Figure 1.

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