

Symmetric Spaces

1 (Locally) Symmetric Spaces

Definition 1.1. A **Riemann symmetric space** is a Riemannian manifold (M, g) such that $\forall p \in M$ there exists a isometry $s_p : M \rightarrow M$ satisfying $s_p(p) = p$ and $ds_p|_p = -\text{id}$.

Remark. A Riemannian manifold M does not have isometries in general.

A few examples:

Example. • On \mathbb{R}^n , $s_p(p + v) = p - v$.

• $S^n \subset \mathbb{R}^{n+1}$ given w.l.o.g at $p = (0, 0, \dots, 0, 1)$ as $s_p(x_1, \dots, x_{n+1}) = (-x_1, \dots, -x_n, x_{n+1})$.

• \mathbb{H}^n as the Poincare disc model (D^n, g_{hyp}) by $s_0(v) = -v$.

Definition 1.2. A Riemannian manifold (M, g) is called a **locally symmetric space** if $\forall p \in M$ there exists a neighbourhood $\mathcal{U}_p \ni p$ and an isometry $s_p : \mathcal{U}_p \rightarrow \mathcal{U}_p$ of $(\mathcal{U}_p, g|_{\mathcal{U}_p})$ such that $ds_p|_p = -\text{id}$.

Note that a diffeomorphism with the same properties (no necessarily an isometry) always exists.

Theorem 1.1. Let (M, g) be a Riemannian manifold, then the following are equal.

1. M is a locally symmetric space.
2. The curvature tensor is parallel, i.e. $\nabla_X R(Y, Z)T \equiv 0, \forall X, Y, Z, T \in V(M)$.

Proof. Take some s_p as definite at $p \in M$. Given $X, Y, Z, T \in V(M)$ when we have

$$\begin{aligned} -\nabla_X R(Y, Z)T(p) &= d(s_p)|_p(\nabla_X R(Y, Z)T)(p) = \nabla_{d(s_p)|_p}(R(Y, Z)T) = \\ &= \nabla_{d(s_p)|_p}R(d(s_p)Y, d(s_p)Z)d(s_p)T = (-1)^4 \nabla_X R(Y, Z)T(p). \end{aligned}$$

Conversely, follows from the following theorem as follows: Since M as parallel curvature tensor and $-\text{Id} : T_p M \rightarrow T_p M$ is a linear isometry preserving the curvature tensor, then for $p \in M$ we can find neighbourhoods $\mathcal{U} \ni p$ and isometry $s_p : \mathcal{U} \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$ such that $d(s_p)|_p = -\text{Id}$. \square

Theorem 1.2. Let $(M, g^M), (N, g^N)$ be Riemannian manifolds with parallel curvature tensor. Let $m \in M, n \in N$ then for any linear isometry $\phi : T_m M \rightarrow T_n N$ preserving curvature tensors ($\phi(R^M(X, Y), Z) = R^N(\phi(X), \phi(Y))\phi(Z)$, $\forall X, Y, Z \in T_m M$), and for any normal neighbourhood $\mathcal{U} = \exp_m(W)$ of m such that $\exp_m|_W$ is a diffeomorphism, there is a normal neighbourhood \mathcal{V} of n and a local isometry $f : \mathcal{U} \rightarrow \mathcal{V}$ such that $f(m) = n$ and $df|_m = \phi$.

Proof. We want to show $f := \exp_m \circ \phi \circ \exp_m^{-1} | \mathcal{U} : \mathcal{U} \rightarrow N$ is a local isometry. We already know that f is an isometry at m .

Given $x \in \mathcal{U}$, $w \in T_x M$ we need to show that $\|df_x w\|_{g^N} = \|w\|_{g^M}$.

Let $v \in T_m M$ such that $\exp_m(v) = x$ and denote $w' = d(\exp_m)^{-1}(w) \in T_m M$. Consider the Jacobi field J along $\exp_m(tv)$ with $J(0) = 0$, $J'(0) = w'$ (i.e. $J(t) = d(\exp_m)|_{tv}(tw')$). Let $e_1 = v$, (e_2, \dots, e_n) an orthonormal basis of $e_1^\perp \subset T_m M$ and $e_i(t)$ the parallel transport of e_i along $c(t) := \exp_m(tv)$, hence $(e_1(t), \dots, e_n(t))$ is orthogonal basis of $T_{\exp_m(tv)} M$.

Then there are $y_i(t) \in C^\infty([0, 1])$ such that $J(t) = \sum_{i=1}^n y_i(t) e_i(t)$.

Let $(\epsilon_1(t), \dots, \epsilon_n(t))$ be the parallel transport of $(\phi(e_1), \dots, \phi(e_n))$ along $\gamma(t) := \exp_n(t\phi(e_1))$ (hence $\epsilon_1(t) = \gamma'(t)$). Define $I(t) := \sum_{i=1}^n y_i(t) \epsilon_i(t)$, and we claim that I is a Jacobi field along γ , with $I(0) = 0$ and $I'(0) = \phi(w')$. For any $i = 1, \dots, n$, $t \in [0, 1]$,

$$\begin{aligned} g_{\gamma(t)}^N (I'' + R^N(\gamma', I)\gamma', \epsilon_i) &= g_{\gamma(t)}^N \left(\sum y_i \epsilon_i, \epsilon_i \right) + g_{\gamma(t)}^N \left(R^N(\gamma', \sum y_i \epsilon_i) \gamma', \epsilon_i \right) \\ &= y_i'' + \sum y_i g_{\gamma(t)}^N (R^N(\epsilon_1(t), \epsilon_j(t)) \epsilon_1(t), \epsilon_i(t)) \\ &= y_i'' + \sum y_i(t) g_{\gamma(0)}^N (R^N(\epsilon_1(0), \epsilon_j(0)) \epsilon_1(0), \epsilon_i(0)) \\ &= y_i'' + \sum y_i(t) g_{c(0)}^N (R^N(e_1(0), e_j(0)) e_1(0), e_i(0)) \\ &= y_i'' + \sum y_i g_{c(t)}^N (R^N(e_1(t), e_j(t)) e_1(t), e_i(t)) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

So $I'' + R^N(\gamma', I)\gamma' = 0$ and I is a Jacobi field. Moreover $I'(0) = \sum y_i'(0) \epsilon_i(0) = \sum y_i'(0) \phi(e_1(0)) = \phi(J'(0)) = \phi(w')$.

By definition

$$df|_x(w) = df_{\exp_m(v)}(d\exp_m|_v(w')) = d\exp_m|_{\phi(v)}(\phi(w'))$$

so $df_x(J(1)) = I(1)$ but

$$\begin{aligned} \|J(1)\|_{g^M}^2 &= \|v\|_{g^M}^2 |y_1(1)|^2 + \sum_{i=2}^n |y_i(1)|^2 \\ &= \|\phi(v)\|_{g^N}^2 |y_1(1)|^2 + \sum_{i=2}^n |y_i(1)|^2 = \|I(1)\|_{g^N}^2 \end{aligned}$$

Thus f is a local isometry. \square

Corollary 1.3. *Let M, N be complete locally symmetric spaces with M simply connected with non-positive sectional curvature. For any curvature tensor preserving linear isometry $\phi : T_m M \rightarrow T_n N$ that preserves the curvature tensor, then there exists a Riemannian covering $f : M \rightarrow N$ with $f(m) = n$ and $df|_m = \phi$.*

Proof. By Cartan-Hadamard, $\exp_m : T_m M \rightarrow M$ is a diffeomorphism. Thus we get a local isometry $f : M \rightarrow N$ with $f(m) = n$ and $df|_m = \phi$. Since M is complete, this guarantees that f is a Riemannian covering. \square

Theorem 1.4. *Let M, N be complete locally symmetric spaces with M simply connected. For any curvature tensor preserving linear isometry $\phi : T_m M \rightarrow$*

$T_n N$ that preserves the curvature tensor, then there exists a Riemannian covering $f : M \rightarrow N$ with $f(m) = n$ and $df|_m = \phi$.

Corollary 1.5. *Let M be a complete locally symmetric space. Then the Riemannian universal cover \tilde{M} of M is a symmetric space.*

Proof. The universal cover of a complete Riemannian manifold is complete. We claim that \tilde{M} is a locally symmetric space: $\pi : \tilde{M} \rightarrow M$ be the covering map, which is a local isometry, then

$$\begin{aligned} \pi(\nabla_X R^{\tilde{M}}(Y, Z), T) &= \nabla_{d\pi(X)} d\pi(R^{\tilde{M}}(Y, Z), T) = \\ &= \nabla_{d\pi(X)} R^M(d\pi(Y), d\pi(Z)) d\pi T = 0 \end{aligned}$$

Since $d\pi|_p$ is an isomorphism, $\nabla_X R^{\tilde{M}}(Y, Z)T = 0$ if and only if \tilde{M} is locally symmetric.

Given $p \in \tilde{M}$, $\text{Id}_{T_p \tilde{M}}$ is a linear isometry and preserves the curvature tensor. Then by a previous corollary, there exists $s_p : \tilde{M} \rightarrow \tilde{M}$ a covering such that $s_p(p) = p$ and $ds_p|_p = -\text{id}_{T_p \tilde{M}}$. As every smooth covering of a simply connected space is a diffeomorphism, this implies that s_p is a diffeomorphism (and a local isometry), so s_p is an isometry. \square

Example. Let $M = S^n$, $N = \mathbb{R}P^n$ with natural metric (with sectional curvature = 1), then M, N are complete locally symmetric spaces. In this case there are many linear isometries that preserve the curvature tensor (in fact they identify with $O(n)$).

Theorem. (Idea). Such an f should be defined such that

$$\begin{array}{ccc} T_m M & \xrightarrow{\phi} & T_n N \\ \downarrow \exp_m & & \downarrow \exp_n \\ M & \xrightarrow{f} & N \end{array}$$

\square

The issue is that in general this is not well defined i.e. there can exist $v, w \in T_m M$ such that $\exp_m v \exp_m w$.

We solve this by extending f along paths and show that the extension is independent of the chosen path.

Remark. Recall that $\mathcal{U} \subset M$ is a *normal neighbourhood* if $\mathcal{U} = \exp_p(W)$ for a star-shaped neighbourhood of 0, $W \subset T_p M$ and diffeomorphism $\exp_p|_W : W \rightarrow \mathcal{U}$.

If additionally $\mathcal{U} = B_r(p)$ ($W = B_r(0)$) then \mathcal{U} is called a *normal ball*.

We also need the following two observations

1. Let M, N be complete locally symmetric spaces $B_r(p), B_\ell(p) \subset M$ normal balls with $\ell > r$ and $f : B_r(p) \subset M \rightarrow V \subset N$ is a local isometry, then $\hat{f} := \exp_{f(p)}^N \circ df_p \circ (\exp_p^M)^{-1} : B_\ell(p) \rightarrow B_\ell(f(p))$ is a local isometry extending f .

Note that it follows from a previous theorem that \hat{f} is a local isometry with $\hat{f}(p) = f(p)$, $d\hat{f}|_p = df|_p$.

Recall that two isometries are equal if they and their differentials are equal at p .

2. For any $p \in M$, $\exists r > 0$ such that $B_r(q)$ is a normal ball for any $q \in B_r(p)$.

Lemma 1.6. *Let M, N be complete locally symmetric spaces, $m \in M$, $m \in \mathcal{U}$ a normal neighbourhood, $f : \mathcal{U} \rightarrow N$ a local isometry and $\sigma : [0, 1] \rightarrow M$ a smooth curve with $\sigma(0) = m$. Then f can be continued along σ i.e. $\forall t \in [0, 1]$, there exist \mathcal{U}_t neighbourhood of $\sigma(t)$ such that $f_t : \mathcal{U}_t \rightarrow N$ is an isometry, and $\exists \epsilon > 0$ such that $|t - s| < \epsilon \implies \mathcal{U}_t \cap \mathcal{U}_s \neq \emptyset$ and $f_t|_{\mathcal{U}_t \cap \mathcal{U}_s} = f_s|_{\mathcal{U}_t \cap \mathcal{U}_s}$.*

Proof. Define $I = \{t \in [0, 1] \mid f \text{ can be continued along } \sigma|_{[0, t]}\}$. I is non-empty (contains t such that $\sigma([0, t]) \subset \mathcal{U}$) and open (If $t_0 \in I$ choose ϵ small enough such that $\sigma(t_0 - \epsilon, t_0 + \epsilon) \subset \mathcal{U}_{t_0}$ and set $\mathcal{U}_t = \mathcal{U}_{t_0}$, $f_t = f_{t_0}$ for $t \in (t_0 - \epsilon, t_0 + \epsilon)$). We show that I is closed. Let q be an accumulation point of $f_t(\sigma(t))$ for $t \rightarrow T := \sup I$. Such a point always exists as N is complete and $f_t(\sigma(t)) \subset \overline{B_{L(\sigma)}(f(\sigma(0)))}$ (since f_t is an isometry and $f_t = f_s$ on $\mathcal{U}_t \cap \mathcal{U}_s$).

Choose $r > 0$ such that it satisfied (2) for $q, \sigma(T)$. Then by construction there exists $t_0 < T$ such that $\sigma(t_0) \in B_r(\sigma(T))$ and $f_{t_0}(\sigma(t_0)) \in B_r(q)$. By (1) we can then extend f_{t_0} on $B_r(\sigma(t_0))$. Setting $f_t = f_{t_0}$ and $\mathcal{U}_t = B_r(\sigma(t_0))$ on $(t_0 - \epsilon, t_0 + \epsilon)$ for ϵ small enough, we can extend f around $\sigma(T)$ thus I is closed. Hence $I = [0, 1]$.

The second part follows from the compactness of I - we can find finitely many t_i such that \mathcal{U}_{t_i} cover I and chose $\mathcal{U}_t = \mathcal{U}_{t_i}$ for t_i minimal such that $t \in \mathcal{U}_{t_i}$ and $f_t = f_{t_i}$. \square

Lemma 1.7. *The continuation of f along σ is unique in the sense that if $\{\mathcal{U}_t, f_t\}, \{V_t, \bar{f}_t\}$ are two different continuations and A_t is the connected component of $\mathcal{U}_t \cap V_t$ containing $\sigma(t)$ then $f_t|_{A_t} = \bar{f}_t|_{A_t}$.*

Proof. If $t \in [0, 1] \mid f_t(\sigma(t)) = \bar{f}_t(\sigma(t)), df_t|_{\sigma(t)} = d\bar{f}_t|_{\sigma(t)}$, then I is open, closed and non-empty $\implies I = [0, 1]$. This holds because isometries are uniquely defined by their value at a point and the differential at the point.

For the same reason $f_t|_{A_T} = \bar{f}_t|_{A_T}$. \square

Lemma 1.8. *Let M, N be complete locally symmetric spaces \mathcal{U} a normal neighbourhood of m , $f : \mathcal{U} \rightarrow N$ a local isometry. Let $\sigma, \tau : [0, 1] \rightarrow M$ smooth curves with $\sigma(0) = \tau(0) = m$, $\tau(1) = \sigma(1)$, curves being homotopic rel ∂I .*

Proof. Let H be the homotopy between σ, τ rel ∂I . Fix s and let f^s be the continuation of f along the path $t \mapsto H(t, s)$. Let

$$I = \{s \in [0, 1] \mid \forall r \leq s \ f^r(\sigma(1)) = f^\sigma(\sigma(1)) \text{ and } df^r|_{\sigma(1)} = df^\sigma|_{\sigma(1)}\}.$$

I is non-empty as $0 \in I$ and open as follows: given $s_0 \in I$ we find $\epsilon > 0$ such that for all $s' \in (s_0 - \epsilon, s_0 + \epsilon)$, $H(t, s') \in \mathcal{U}_t$. By (2) and compactness, there exists $r > 0$ such that $B_r(\sigma(t))$ is a normal ball. Assume then that $B_r(H(s_0, t)) \subset \mathcal{U}_t$ (as H is smooth). Setting $\mathcal{U}_t^s = \mathcal{U}_t^{s_0}$ and $f_t^{s'} = f_t^{s_0}$ gives continuation along $H(\cdot, s')$ thus $(s_0 - \epsilon, s_0 + \epsilon) \subset I$ (by construction) and I is open.

For I closed, let $A = \sup I$ and as before $\exists r > 0$ such that $B_r(H(t, A))$ is a normal ball for all $t \in [0, 1]$ and $B_r(f^A(H(t, A)))$ is a normal ball. As before $\exists \epsilon > 0$ such that $\forall s : |A - s| < \epsilon$, $H(t, s) \in B_r(H(t, A))$ so f^A is a continuation of f along $H(\cdot, s)$ for $s \in (A - \epsilon, A)$ where $f^A(\sigma(1)) = f^s(\sigma(1)) = f^\sigma(\sigma(1))$ and $df_{\sigma(1)}^A = df_{\sigma(1)}^s = df_{\sigma(1)}^\sigma$ thus $A \in I \implies I = [0, 1]$. \square

Back to the theorem we are trying to prove

Proof. Theorem Since M, N are complete, \exp is defined everywhere. Define f (locally) though the relation $f(\exp_m(v)) = \exp_n(\phi(v))$ - this is indeed well defined on a normal neighbourhood \mathcal{U} of m .

Set $\bar{f} = f|_{\mathcal{U}}$, and define f on $\exp_m(v)$ via continuation of \bar{f} along $\sigma(t) := \exp_m(tv)$. If there exists $v, w \in T_m M$ such that $\exp_m(v) = \exp_m(w)$ then the paths $\sigma(t) = \exp_m(tv)$ and $\tau(t) = \exp_m(tw)$ are homotopic rel ∂I due to M being simply-connected. Then be the previous lemma, it is well defined as $f(\exp_m(v)) = f(\exp_m(w))$. As f is a continuation along paths it is a local isometry. M being complete implies that f is a smooth covering (+ localisation) by a previous lemma. Hence this is Riemann covering. \square

Theorem 1.9. *Let M be a complete, simply-connected Riemannian manifold then the following are equal.*

1. M is a symmetric space.
2. M is a locally symmetric space.
3. Any curvature preserving linear isometry $\phi : T_x M \rightarrow T_y M$ is induced by a (unique) linear isometry $f : M \rightarrow M$ such that $f(x) = y$, $df_x = \phi$.

Proof. 1 \implies 2 is trivial, 2 \implies 3 hold by the previous theorem. For 3 \implies 1, we apply 3 to $-\text{Id} : T_p M \rightarrow T_p M$. \square

Remark. Not all symmetric spaces are simply-connected.

Example. • $\mathbb{R}P^n$ is a non-simply-connected symmetric space.

- $T^n = (S^1)^n$ is a symmetric space (obviously not 1-connected).

Proposition 1.10. *Let M be a symmetric space, the M is complete.*

Proof. \square

Definition 1.3. Let M be a smooth manifold. We say that a group action $G \curvearrowright M$ is *transitive* if $\forall p, q$ there exists $g \in G$ such that $g(p) = q$.

Proposition 1.11. *Let M be a symmetric space. Then $\text{Iso}(M)$ acts transitively.*

Proof. \square

Definition 1.4. An isometry $f : M \rightarrow M$ is called a *transvection* if there exists $p \in M$ and geodesic $\gamma : [0, 1] \rightarrow M$ with $\gamma(0) = p$, $\gamma(1) = f(p)$ such that f realises parallel transport along γ .

Remark. If M is not flat, then parallel transport really depends on the curve (or geodesic)

Proposition 1.12. *Let M be a symmetric space. For any $p, q \in M$ and any geodesic $\gamma : [0, 1] \rightarrow M$ with $\gamma(0) = p$, $\gamma(1) = q$, there exists an isometry realising parallel transport along γ .*

Proof. \square