

地球内部最速降线 Earth Brachistochrone

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此题源自 Goldstein 的 Classical Mechanics 一书习题 2.6

1 题目呈现

Find the Euler-Lagrange equation describing the brachistochrone curve for a particle moving inside a spherical Earth of uniform mass density. Obtain a first integral for this differential equation by analogy to the Jacobi integral h . With the help of this integral, show that the desired curve is a hypocycloid (the curve described by a point on a circle rolling on the inside of a larger circle). Obtain an expression for the time of travel along the brachistochrone between two points on Earth's surface. How long would it take to go from New York to Los Angeles (assumed to be 4800 km apart on the surface) along a brachistochrone tunnel (assuming no friction) and how far below the surface would the deepest point of the tunnel be ?

假设地球内部的物质是均匀分布的, 取地球中心的引力势能为零, 则地球内部单位质量的引力势能 $V(r)$ 为 $V(r) = \frac{1}{2}(g/R)r^2$, 其中 g 为地球表面的重力加速度, R 为地球的半径, r 为地球内部距离地球中心的距离。

- (a) 假设从地球表面的两端 (例如 $A B$ 两点) 建造一条直线隧道, 一个检验粒子从 A 点开始静止无摩擦地下落到 B , 试证明该运动为简谐振动, 粒子从 A 下落到 B 所需的时间为:

$\tau_0 = \pi\sqrt{R/g} \simeq 42.2$ 分钟, 且该结果与 $A B$ 两点的位置无关。

- (b) 考虑在 $A B$ 建造一条所需时间最短的隧道, 假设该隧道的方程为: $r = r(\theta)$, 试通过变分法得到 $r(\theta)$ 所满足的方程, 并得到如下的首次积分方程:

$$\frac{r^2}{\sqrt{(dr/d\theta)^2 + r^2}\sqrt{R^2 - r^2}} = \frac{r_0}{\sqrt{R^2 - r_0^2}}$$

其中 r_0 为隧道距离地球中心最近的点。进一步积分上式, 得到:

$$\theta = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{R}{r_0} \sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}} \right) - \frac{r_0}{R} \tan^{-1} \left(\sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}} \right)$$

其中已取 r_0 处 $\theta = 0$ 。易证, $A B$ 两点的角度差为:

$$\Delta\theta = \pi(1 - r_0/R)$$

- (c) 引入参数:

$$\tan \frac{\phi}{2} = \sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}}$$

因此, 在 $r = r_0$ 处, $\phi = 0$ 。在 $A B$ 两点: $\phi = \pm\pi$ 。证明隧道方程可以取如下的形式:

$$r^2 = \frac{1}{2}(R^2 + r_0^2) - \frac{1}{2}(R^2 - r_0^2)\cos\phi$$
$$\theta = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{R}{r_0} \tan \frac{\phi}{2} \right) - \frac{r_0}{2R}\phi$$

证明该方程其实为内摆线 (圆内圆滚线) 方程: 是半径为 $a = \frac{1}{2}(R - r_0)$ 的小圆沿着半径为 R 的大圆在其内部无滑动的滚动过程中, 小圆上某固定点的轨迹方程。

- (d) 考虑粒子从 A 到 B 参量随时间的变化。证明: $\phi = 2\pi(t/\tau)$, 其中 $\tau = \tau_0\sqrt{1 - (r_0/R)^2}$ 是粒子从 A 到 B 所需的时间。试比较一下从合肥到北京两点之间 τ 与 τ_0 的差别。

2 解题过程

(a) 写出 Lagrangian:

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L} &= \frac{1}{2}m\dot{x}^2 - \frac{1}{2}\frac{g}{R}(x^2 + r_0^2)m \\ \delta\mathcal{L} &= 0 \quad \Rightarrow \quad \ddot{x} + \frac{g}{R}x = 0 \\ T &= \frac{2\pi}{\omega} = 2\pi\sqrt{\frac{R}{g}}, \quad \tau_0 = \pi\sqrt{\frac{R}{g}}\end{aligned}$$

(b) 首先, 通过引力势能确定 r 处的速度 $v(r)$

$$\begin{aligned}F(r) &= \frac{GM}{R^3}r, \quad (r < R), \quad \therefore V(r) = \int_0^r F(r)dr = \frac{GMm}{2R^3}r^2 \\ E &= T + V = \frac{1}{2}mv^2 + \frac{GMm}{2R^3}r^2, \quad \therefore v(r) = \sqrt{\frac{g(R^2 - r^2)}{R}}\end{aligned}$$

计算最短时间:

$$t = \int_A^B \frac{ds}{v} = \int_0^{\theta_{AB}} \sqrt{\frac{R(r^2 + r'^2)}{g(R^2 - r^2)}} d\theta = \sqrt{\frac{R}{g}} \int_0^{\theta_{AB}} \mathcal{L}(r(\theta), r'(\theta), \theta) d\theta, \quad \text{边界 } r(0) = r(\theta_{AB}) = R$$

代入 Euler-Lagrange 方程:

$$\frac{d}{dt} \left(\frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \dot{q}} \right) - \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial q} = 0,$$

此处因为 Lagrangian 不显含 θ , 应用 Beltrami 恒等式

$$\begin{aligned}\mathcal{L} - r' \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} &= \text{const.} \\ \therefore \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{d\theta} &= \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r} r' + \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} r'' + \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \theta} = \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{d\theta} = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r} r' + \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} \frac{dr'}{d\theta} + \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \theta} \\ \Rightarrow r' \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r} &= \frac{d\mathcal{L}}{d\theta} - \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} r'' - \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \theta} \quad \Rightarrow \quad \frac{d}{d\theta} \left(\mathcal{L} - r' \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} \right) = \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \theta} \\ \text{For: } \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial \theta} &= 0, \quad \therefore \mathcal{L} - r' \frac{\partial \mathcal{L}}{\partial r'} = \text{const.}\end{aligned}$$

由此可以得到:

$$\frac{r^2}{\sqrt{(R^2 - r^2)(r^2 + r'^2)}} = \text{const.}$$

设最近点为 r_0 , 则满足

$$\frac{r_0}{\sqrt{R^2 - r_0^2}} = \text{const.} = \frac{r^2}{\sqrt{(R^2 - r^2)(r^2 + r'^2)}}$$

代入 $r' = \frac{dr}{d\theta}$, 化简上式:

$$\begin{aligned}\therefore d\theta &= \frac{r_0}{rR} \sqrt{\frac{R^2 - r^2}{r^2 - r_0^2}} dr \\ \Rightarrow \theta &= \arctan \left(\frac{R}{r_0} \sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}} \right) - \frac{r_0}{R} \arctan \left(\sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}} \right)\end{aligned}$$

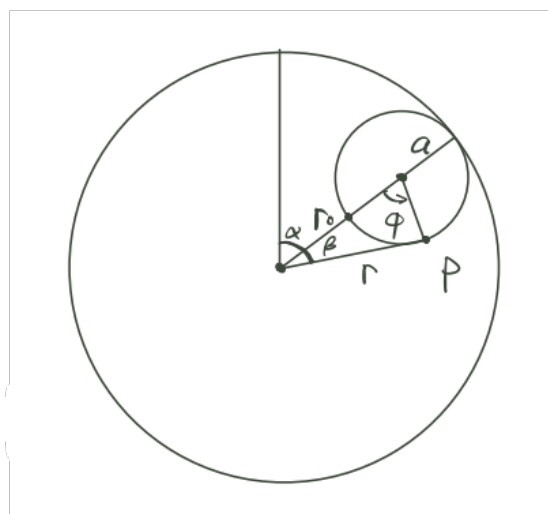
取 $\theta_A = 0$, $\theta_B = \pi(1 - \frac{r_0}{R})$, $A B$ 两点的角度差为: $\Delta\theta = \pi(1 - r_0/R)$

(c) 引入参数:

$$\begin{aligned}\tan \frac{\phi}{2} &= \sqrt{\frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2}} \\ \Rightarrow \theta &= \arctan \left(\frac{R}{r_0} \tan \frac{\phi}{2} \right) - \frac{r_0}{2R} \phi \\ \therefore \left(\tan \frac{\phi}{2} \right)^2 &= \frac{r^2 - r_0^2}{R^2 - r^2} \quad ; \quad \cos \phi = \frac{1 - \tan^2 \frac{\phi}{2}}{1 + \tan^2 \frac{\phi}{2}} \\ \Rightarrow r^2 &= \frac{1}{2} (R^2 + r_0^2) - \frac{1}{2} (R^2 - r_0^2) \cos \phi\end{aligned}$$

证明内摆线方程:

图 1: 内摆线示意图



$$\begin{aligned}r^2 &= a^2 + (R - a)^2 - 2a(R - a) \cos \phi \\ &= a^2 + (r_0 + a)^2 - (R - r_0)(r_0 + a) \cos \phi \\ &= \frac{1}{2} (R + r_0)^2 - \frac{1}{2} (R^2 - r_0^2) \cos \phi\end{aligned}$$

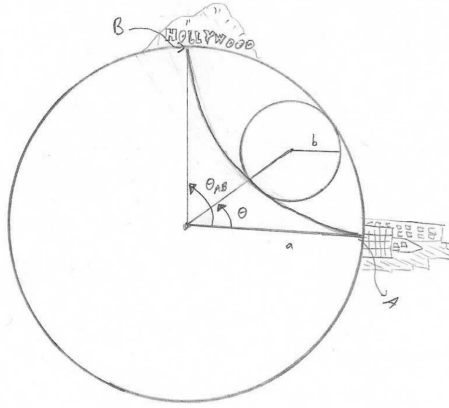
因为要等到 θ 关系, 需要 $\theta = \alpha + \beta$

$$\alpha R = a\phi \Rightarrow \alpha = \frac{a}{R} \phi = \left(\frac{1}{2} - \frac{r_0}{2R} \right) \phi, \quad \tan \beta = \frac{a \sin \phi}{R - a(1 + \cos \phi)}$$

$$\Rightarrow \theta = \arctan \left(\frac{R}{r_0} \tan \frac{\phi}{2} \right) - \frac{r_0}{2R} \phi$$

(d)

图 2: 纽约到洛杉矶的内摆线最速降线



$$t(\theta) = \int_0^{\theta_{AB}} \sqrt{\frac{R(r^2 + r'^2)}{g(R^2 - r^2)}} d\theta = \frac{\sqrt{R^2 - r_0^2}}{2\sqrt{gR}} \int_R^r \frac{2rdr}{\sqrt{(r^2 - r_0^2)(R^2 - r^2)}} = \int_A^B \sqrt{\frac{R(R-a)}{ag}} dt$$

其中 a 为内摆圆的半径,

$$\because r_{AB} = R, \Rightarrow \cos \phi = 1, \Rightarrow \frac{Rt}{a} = 2\pi n \quad (\text{旋转了 } n \text{ 周})$$

取 $n = 1$ 时候时间最短, 只要内摆圆转一周

$$\because \theta_{AB} = \frac{2\pi a}{R} = \frac{S}{R} \quad (S \text{ 为两地距离})$$

所以 $n = 1$ 时候, $a = \frac{S}{2\pi}$

$$\therefore t = \sqrt{\frac{R(R-a)}{ag}} \frac{2\pi a}{R} = \sqrt{\frac{S}{R} \frac{(2\pi R - S)}{g}}$$

代入合肥到北京距离 $S = 1034.739 \text{ km}$, 得到 $t \approx 28.35 \text{ min}$

还可以求出轨道长度:

$$l(\theta) = \frac{8(R-a)a}{R} \sin^2 \left(\frac{R}{4a} \theta \right) = \frac{8(R - \frac{S}{2\pi}) \frac{S}{2\pi}}{R} \sin^2 \left(\frac{S}{4 \frac{S}{2\pi}} \right) \approx 8243.857 \text{ km}$$

以及内部最深深度

$$r_0 = R - 2a = R - \frac{S}{\pi} \approx 6040 \text{ km}$$

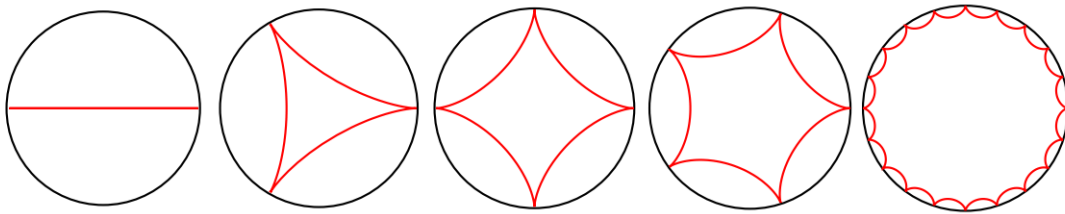


Figure 3: Hypocycloid for integer values of $a/b = 2, 3, 4, 5$, and 20 .

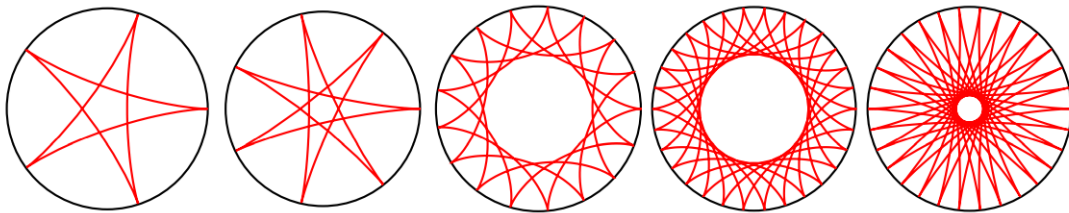


Figure 4: Hypocycloid for rational values of $a/b = \frac{5}{3}, \frac{7}{3}, \frac{17}{4}, \frac{30}{7}$, and $\frac{30}{13}$.

3 参考资料

1. https://www.physics.unlv.edu/~maxham/gravitytrain.pdf?origin=publication_detail
2. <https://mathworld.wolfram.com/Hypocycloid.html>
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beltrami_identity
4. 理论力学讲义，袁业飞编