

Pacific Journal of Mathematics

**POWER-ASSOCIATIVE ALGEBRAS AND RIEMANNIAN
CONNECTIONS**

ARTHUR ARGYLE SAGLE

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Let G/H be a reductive homogeneous space with the corresponding Lie algebra decomposition $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{m} + \mathfrak{h}$ where the complementary subspace \mathfrak{m} satisfies the condition $(\text{ad } H)\mathfrak{m} \subset \mathfrak{m}$. It has been shown that the G -invariant connections on G/H correspond to certain non-associative algebras (\mathfrak{m}, α) and that these algebras, in turn, correspond to certain local analytic multiplications on G/H . These correspondences generalize many of the results of Lie theory; it has been shown, for example, that there is a change of coordinates at $\bar{e} = eH$ which makes the algebras associated with a local multiplication anti-commutative. However, if G/H has pseudo-Riemannian structures and we require that the change of coordinate maps be local isometries, then the existence of a change of coordinates which gives an anti-commutative algebra is no longer guaranteed. Thus it is natural to ask when an algebra (\mathfrak{m}, α) inducing a pseudo-Riemannian connection is anti-commutative and it is shown in this paper that a necessary and sufficient condition is basically that (\mathfrak{m}, α) be power-associative.

1. Basics. Let G be a connected Lie group with Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} and let H be a closed (Lie) subgroup with Lie algebra \mathfrak{h} . Then the pair (G, H) or $(\mathfrak{g}, \mathfrak{h})$ is called a *reductive pair* if there exists a subspace \mathfrak{m} of \mathfrak{g} such that $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{m} + \mathfrak{h}$ (subspace direct sum) and $(\text{ad } H)\mathfrak{m} \subset \mathfrak{m}$. The corresponding analytic manifold $M = G/H$ is called a *reductive homogeneous space* and \mathfrak{m} is identified with the tangent space $M_{\bar{e}}$. For a reductive space with a fixed Lie algebra decomposition $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{m} + \mathfrak{h}$ it is shown in [2], [6] that there is a 1-1 correspondence between G -invariant connections ∇ and nonassociative algebras (\mathfrak{m}, α) with $\text{ad } H \subset \text{Aut}(\mathfrak{m}, \alpha)$. (α is the bilinear algebra multiplication on \mathfrak{m} and $\text{Aut}(\mathfrak{m}, \alpha)$ is the automorphism group of the algebra (\mathfrak{m}, α) .)

A G -invariant pseudo-Riemannian connection on a reductive homogeneous space G/H corresponds to an algebra (\mathfrak{m}, α) with a nondegenerate symmetric bilinear form C such that for all $X, Y, Z \in \mathfrak{m}$ and $U \in \mathfrak{h}$

$$(1) \quad C((\text{ad } U)X, Y) + C(X, (\text{ad } U)Y) = 0 \quad \text{and}$$

$$(2) \quad C(\alpha(Z, X), Y) + C(X, \alpha(Z, Y)) = 0.$$

We denote such algebras by $(\mathfrak{m}, \alpha, C)$ and they are discussed in

[4], [6], [7]. In particular since the torsion tensor is zero we have from [2] that for $X, Y \in m$

$$(3) \quad \alpha(X, Y) - \alpha(Y, X) = XY$$

where we use the notation $XY = [X, Y]_m$ (resp. $h(X, Y)$) for the projection of $[X, Y]$ in g onto m (resp. h). Thus the algebra (m, α, C) is reductive Lie admissible [5] and in particular for $h = \{0\}$ the algebra (g, α, C) is Lie admissible [1].

As an example let $\pi: G \rightarrow G/H$ be the canonical projection of G onto the reductive space G/H . For any $X \in m$ the curves $\gamma(t) = \pi \exp tX$ are geodesics relative to the G -invariant pseudo-Riemannian connection ∇ given by (m, α, C) if and only if $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$. This connection is called the *pseudo-Riemannian connection of the first kind* [2], [4] and we use the notation $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ for the corresponding algebra where B now denotes the nondegenerate form. In particular, let g and h be semi-simple and let Kill denote the Killing form of g . Since $\text{Kill}|_{h \times h}$ is nondegenerate we can write $g = m + h$ with $m = h^\perp$ relative to the Killing form. Thus (g, h) is a reductive pair. The form $B = \text{Kill}|_{m \times m}$ and the multiplication $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ give an algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ which satisfies conditions (1) and (2) and therefore induces a pseudo-Riemannian connection of the first kind. (One, of course, considers $B = -\text{Kill}|_{m \times m}$ in case $\text{Kill}|_{m \times m}$ is negative definite as is the case for $G = SO(n)$ and $H = SO(k)$.)

Now let the reductive space G/H have a pseudo-Riemannian connection of the first kind given by the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ and suppose G/H has another pseudo-Riemannian connection given by the algebra (m, α, C) . Then the nondegeneracy of B and C implies the existence of an $S \in GL(m)$ such that

$$C(X, Y) = B(SX, Y)$$

for all $X, Y \in m$. Also by the symmetry and equation (1) we obtain

$$(*) \quad S^b = S \text{ and } [\text{ad } U, S] = 0$$

for all $U \in h$, where b denotes the adjoint relative to B . In [3], [4], [6] it is noted that the set, J , of endomorphisms of m satisfying (*) forms a Jordan algebra relative to the usual multiplication $S_1 \cdot S_2 = (1/2)(S_1 S_2 + S_2 S_1)$. Also the formula for α is given by

$$2\alpha(X, Y) = XY + S^{-1}[X(SY) - (SX)Y]$$

where $XY = [X, Y]_m$ is the multiplication in the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$. Many examples of the algebras (m, α, C) determined by the Jordan algebra J are given in [4]. In the next section we discuss some of

the algebraic identities which these algebras may satisfy. These identities for the algebras (m, α, C) are related to isometric coordinate changes and H -spaces $(G/H, \mu)$ as discussed in [7].

2. Power-associative algebras. An algebra A over a field F is power-associative if every element $X \in A$ generates an associative subalgebra $F[X]$; see [9]. We now assume the algebra (m, α, C) discussed in §1 is power-associative and use the notation $X^n = \alpha(X, \dots, \alpha(X, X) \dots)$ where X occurs n times; this notation is used only for the algebra (m, α, C) and is not to be confused with the product XY in $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$. The following result indicates that an algebra (m, α, C) which defines an invariant Riemannian connection on a reductive space G/H does not satisfy the "usual" identities unless the algebra is anti-commutative; that is, unless the connection is of the first kind.

THEOREM 1. *Let (G, H) be a reductive pair with a corresponding Lie algebra decomposition $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{m} + \mathfrak{h}$.*

(a) *If the algebra (m, α, C) defines an invariant Riemannian connection on G/H , then $\alpha(X^2, X) = \alpha(X, X^2)$ if and only if $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ for all $X, Y \in \mathfrak{m}$.*

(b) *Let G/H have an invariant Riemannian connection of the first kind which is determined by the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$. If the algebra (m, α, C) defines an invariant pseudo-Riemannian connection on G/H , then the algebra (m, α, C) is power associative if and only if $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ for all $X, Y \in \mathfrak{m}$.*

Proof. Since an anti-commutative algebra is power-associative, we need only prove the converses of the above statements.

(a) From formula (2) the positive definite form C must satisfy $C(V, \alpha(U, V)) = 0$ for all $U, V \in \mathfrak{m}$. Now using this and formula (2) we see that for any $X \in \mathfrak{m}$

$$\begin{aligned} C(\alpha(X, X), \alpha(X, X)) &= -C(X, \alpha(X, \alpha(X, X))) \\ &= -C(X, \alpha(\alpha(X, X), X)) \\ &= 0. \end{aligned}$$

where the identity $\alpha(X, X^2) = \alpha(X^2, X)$ is used for the second equality. Thus $\alpha(X, X) = 0$. Using (3), we obtain $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$.

(b) If we are given an algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ which induces a Riemannian connection of the first kind and a second algebra (m, α, C) which induces another pseudo-Riemannian connection, then, as remarked in §1, we can write $C(X, Y) = B(SX, Y)$ and $2\alpha(X, Y) = XY + S^{-1}[X(SY) - (SX)Y]$ for some $S \in GL(m)$. Using the fact

that the positive definite form B satisfies $B(ZX, Y) + B(X, ZY) = 0$, we now show that the algebra (m, α, C) has no nonzero idempotent elements. For suppose $E = \alpha(E, E)$; then from the above formula $E = S^{-1}[E(SE)]$ so that $SE = E(SE)$. From this $SE = E(E(SE))$ and therefore

$$\begin{aligned} B(SE, SE) &= B(SE, E(E(SE))) \\ &= -B(E(SE), E(SE)) \\ &= -B(SE, SE) \end{aligned}$$

so that $B(SE, SE) = 0$ and $SE = 0$. As S is nonsingular, $E = 0$.

Since the power-associative algebra (m, α, C) contains no idempotents, the associative subalgebra $F[X]$ generated by any $X \in m$ is nil [9; Prop. 3.3]; that is, for each $X \in m$, there exists a positive integer p such that $X^p = 0$ in the algebra (m, α, C) . By power-associativity if $X^{r+t} = 0$ for positive integers r and t , then

$$0 = X^{r+t} = \alpha(X^r, X^t) = \frac{1}{2} X^r X^t + \frac{S^{-1}}{2} [X^r(SX^t) - (SX^r)X^t].$$

Thus using $\alpha(X, Y) - \alpha(Y, X) = XY$ we also see $X^r X^t = \alpha(X^r, X^t) - \alpha(X^t, X^r) = X^{r+t} - X^{r+t} = 0$ which implies

$$(4) \quad X^r(SX^t) = (SX^r)X^t$$

whenever $X^{r+t} = 0$.

We now show $X^3 = 0$ implies $X^2 = 0$. For suppose $X^3 = 0$; then from formula (4) we obtain

$$X(SX^2) = (SX)X^2.$$

Using the formula for $\alpha(X, Y)$ we note $SX^2 = X(SX)$ and have

$$\begin{aligned} B(SX^2, SX^2) &= B(X(SX), SX^2) \\ &= -B(SX, X(SX^2)) \\ &= -B(SX, (SX)X^2) \\ &= -B((SX)(SX), X^2) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

using the anti-commutativity $ZZ = 0$ in $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$. Thus $SX^2 = 0$ which implies $X^2 = 0$.

Next we show $X^{n+1} = 0$ implies $X^n = 0$ for $n \geq 3$ and consequently by induction $X^{n+1} = 0$ implies $X^2 = 0$. For suppose $X^{n+1} = 0$; then $X^{2n-1} = 0$ and from formula (4) we obtain

$$X(SX^n) = (SX)X^n \text{ and } X^{n-1}(SX^n) = (SX^{n-1})X^n.$$

Using these we see

$$\begin{aligned} B(X(SX^{n-1}), SX^n) &= -B(SX^{n-1}, X(SX^n)) \\ &= -B(SX^{n-1}, (SX)X^n) \\ &= B((SX^{n-1})X^n, SX) \end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned} B((SX)X^{n-1}, SX^n) &= B(SX, X^{n-1}SX^n) \\ &= B(SX, (SX^{n-1})X^n) . \end{aligned}$$

Thus using $X^{n-1}X = \alpha(X^{n-1}, X) - \alpha(X, X^{n-1}) = X^n - X^n = 0$, we obtain $2SX^n = X(SX^{n-1}) - (SX)X^{n-1}$ and

$$\begin{aligned} 2B(SX^n, SX^n) &= B(X(SX^{n-1}) - (SX)X^{n-1}, SX^n) \\ &= B(X(SX^{n-1}), SX^n) - B((SX)X^{n-1}, SX^n) \\ &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

and therefore $X^n = 0$. Since the algebra (m, α, C) is nil, we have for every $X \in m$ that $X^p = 0$ for some integer p . Thus by the above $0 = X^2 = \alpha(X, X)$. Using (3), we obtain $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$.

REMARKS. The conclusion of Theorem 1 that $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ need not imply the forms B and C are equal. However, let us consider the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ as given where we can assume B is just nondegenerate. Then the endomorphism S which determines C for another algebra (m, α, C) with $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ is in the multiplication centralizer of $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$. To see this first recall that the multiplication centralizer, Γ , of the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ consists of those endomorphisms T of m satisfying $L(X)T = TL(X)$ for all $X \in m$, where $L(X): m \rightarrow m: Y \rightarrow XY$. In [9; p. 15] the multiplication centralizer is discussed in general. It is proven that Γ is a subalgebra of the algebra of all endomorphisms of m and if the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ is simple, Γ is a field. Now, to see that S is in Γ we use formula (2) and $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$ and note that

$$\begin{aligned} B(S(XY), Z) &= C(XY, Z) \\ &= 2C(\alpha(X, Y), Z) \\ &= -2C(Y, \alpha(X, Z)) \\ &= -C(Y, XZ) \\ &= -B(SY, XZ) \\ &= B(X(SY), Z) . \end{aligned}$$

Since B is nondegenerate, $S(XY) = X(SY)$; that is, $SL(X) = L(X)S$ which implies $S \in \Gamma$. Conversely, a nonsingular endomorphism S in $\Gamma \cap J$ determines an algebra (m, α, C) with $\alpha(X, Y) = (1/2)XY$. In

particular, if S is chosen so that C is positive definite, then the corresponding connection is Riemannian.

As an example, let the pseudo-Riemannian connection determined by the nonzero algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ be holonomy irreducible. Then as discussed in [3], [4], [6], the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ is simple. If we require that the algebra $(m, (1/2)XY, C)$ be such that C is positive definite, then the following computations prove S is symmetric relative to C . For $X, Y \in m$,

$$\begin{aligned} C(X, SY) &= B(SX, SY) \\ &= B(SY, SX) \\ &= C(Y, SX) \\ &= C(SX, Y) \end{aligned}$$

so that $S^c = S$, where c denotes the adjoint relative to C . Therefore, S has a nonzero real characteristic root λ and the characteristic root space $n = \{X \in m: SY = \lambda Y\}$ is a nonzero ideal of $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$; this uses $L(X)S = SL(X)$ for all $X \in m$. Since $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ is simple, we see $n = m$ and consequently $S = \lambda I$; thus the original form B must be definite in this case. More generally, if $(m, (1/2)XY, B)$ is semi-simple (that is, a direct sum of simple ideals), then the corresponding S is diagonalizable. These semi-simple algebras often occur when g and h are semi-simple Lie algebras as discussed in [4], [8].

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Received June 20, 1976.

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The *Pacific Journal of Mathematics* is issued monthly as of January 1966. Regular subscription rate: \$72.00 a year (6 Vols., 12 issues). Special rate: \$36.00 a year to individual members of supporting institutions.

Subscriptions, orders for back numbers, and changes of address should be sent to Pacific Journal of Mathematics, 103 Highland Boulevard, Berkeley, California, 94708.

PUBLISHED BY PACIFIC JOURNAL OF MATHEMATICS, A NON-PROFIT CORPORATION

Printed at Kokusai Bunken Insatsusha (International Academic Printing Co., Ltd.),
8-8, 3-chome, Takadanobaba, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan.

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