

## Preface

Given a smooth  $n$ -dimensional Riemannian manifold  $(M^n, g)$ , does it admit a smooth isometric embedding in Euclidean space  $\mathbb{R}^N$  of some dimension  $N$ ? This is a long-standing problem in differential geometry. When an isometric embedding in  $\mathbb{R}^N$  is possible for sufficiently large  $N$ , there arises a further question. What is the smallest possible value for  $N$ ? Those questions have more classical local versions in which solutions are sought only on a sufficiently small neighborhood of some specific point on the manifold.

In this book we present, in a systematic way, results concerning the isometric embedding of Riemannian manifolds in Euclidean spaces, both local and global, with the focus being on the isometric embedding of surfaces in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ . The book consists of three parts. In the first, we discuss some fundamental results of the isometric embedding of Riemannian manifolds in Euclidean spaces; these include the Janet-Cartan Theorem and Nash Embedding Theorem. In the second part, we study the local isometric embedding of surfaces in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ ; we discuss metrics with Gauss curvature which is everywhere positive, negative, nonnegative, nonpositive, as well as the case of mixed sign. In the third part, we study the global isometric embedding of surfaces in  $\mathbb{R}^3$ ; the main focus is on metrics on  $S^2$  with positive Gauss curvature and complete metrics in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  with negative Gauss curvature. The emphasis of this book is on the *PDE techniques* for proving these results.

Differential geometers might, at first glance, consider the inclination toward analysis to be misplaced in these geometric problems and might even prefer less local coordinate calculations. However, all local calculations are designed to uncover the relevant PDE in the most efficient manner. The goal of this book is then to give a clean exposition of the techniques used in the analysis of these PDEs.

Completely omitted from the book is the local isometric embedding of higher-dimensional Riemannian manifolds in the Euclidean space of least dimension. Works on the higher-dimensional problems have involved much more differential geometry and methods such as exterior differential systems and are therefore far less accessible than the techniques presented in this book.

In integrating the results and techniques of a wide range of literature on the subject, we have tried to accommodate a broad readership as well as experts in the field. It is our objective that this book should provide a good entry into the area for second- or third-year graduate students. With this in mind, we have excluded everything that is technically complicated. Background knowledge is kept to an essential minimum. In Riemannian geometry, we assume only an acquaintance with basic concepts. In analysis, we assume the Cauchy-Kowalewsky theorem and some basic knowledge on elliptic and hyperbolic differential equations. On the

other hand, we hope that experts in the field will appreciate the organization of the results, covering the span of more than a century, into a unified whole.

Each chapter ends with bibliographical notes. Attributions are kept to a minimum in the body of the text, and the history and context of the works are expanded in the bibliographical notes.

All works quoted herein are already published.

*Acknowledgments.* We would like to express our gratitude to Shing-Tung Yau. Since the late 1970's, Yau has been promoting the problem of isometric embedding of Riemannian manifolds in Euclidean spaces. He taught a graduate course on this subject at the University of California at Berkeley in 1977 and at the National Tsing Hua University of Taiwan in 1989. His lecture notes were of interest among those studying the problem. It is fair to say that the research in this subject would not have reached its present level without his advocacy.

It is with pleasure we record here our thanks to our thesis advisors, Chaohao Gu (for J.-X. H.) and Fanghua Lin (for Q. H.). Our mathematical careers began with their patient guidance many years ago. Their persistent encouragement played an essential role in our research.

In preparing this book, we have benefitted greatly from discussions with many of our colleagues and friends. We especially thank Pengfei Guan, Yanyan Li and Chang-Shou Lin for many helpful discussions. A special thanks goes to Brian Smyth for reading the entire manuscript and for many suggested improvements.

Part 2 was presented by Q. H. in a series of seminars when he was a visitor at the Max-Planck Institute for Mathematics in Leipzig in 2002-2003. He would like to thank MPI for its hospitality. In particular, he would like to thank Stefan Müller for arranging his visit and providing him with a good opportunity to write this book.

Thanks also should be expressed to the American Mathematical Society, especially Edward Dunne and Deborah Smith, for their invaluable assistance in bringing this book to press.

The research related to this book was partially supported by a Sloan Foundation Fellowship and a grant from the National Science Foundation for Q. H. and a grant from the National Science Foundation of China for J.-X. H.

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