

A remark on Schubert cells and the duality of orbits on flag manifolds

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Abstract. It is known that the closure of an arbitrary $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbit on a flag manifold is expressed as a product of a closed $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbit and a Schubert cell ([M2], [Sp]). We already applied this fact to the duality of orbits on flag manifolds ([GM]). We refine here this result and give its new applications to the study of domains arising from the duality.

1. Duality of orbits on flag manifolds.

Let $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ be a connected complex semisimple Lie group and $G_{\mathbf{R}}$ a connected real form of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$. Let $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ be the complexification in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ of a maximal compact subgroup K of $G_{\mathbf{R}}$. Let $X = G_{\mathbf{C}}/P$ be a flag manifold of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ where P is an arbitrary parabolic subgroup of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$. Then there exists a natural one-to-one correspondence between the set of $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbits S and the set of $G_{\mathbf{R}}$ -orbits S' on X given by the condition:

$$S \leftrightarrow S' \iff S \cap S' \text{ is non-empty and compact} \quad (\text{A})$$

([M3]). In the following, we will identify orbits S with $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}P$ double cosets and S' with $G_{\mathbf{R}}\text{-}P$ cosets.

We defined in [GM] a subset $C(S)$ of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ by

$$C(S) = \{x \in G_{\mathbf{C}} \mid xS \cap S' \text{ is non-empty and compact in } X = G_{\mathbf{C}}/P\}$$

where S' is the $G_{\mathbf{R}}$ -orbit on X given by (A).

If S is closed, then S' is open ([M1]) and so the condition

$$xS \cap S' \text{ is non-empty and compact in } G_{\mathbf{C}}/P$$

implies

$$xS \subset S'.$$

Hence the set $C(S)_0$ is the cycle domain (cycle space) for S' ([WW]) where $C(S)_0$ denotes the connected component of $C(S)$ containing the identity.

On the other hand, let S_{op} denote the unique open $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double coset in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ where B is a Borel subgroup of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ contained in P . (We will keep this notation for the whole note.) Then S'_{op} is the unique closed $G_{\mathbf{R}}\text{-}B$ double coset in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ and the condition

$$xS_{\text{op}} \cap S'_{\text{op}} \text{ is non-empty and compact in } G_{\mathbf{C}}/B$$

implies

$$xS_{\text{op}} \supset S'_{\text{op}}.$$

Let $\{S_j \mid j \in J\}$ be the set of $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double cosets in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ of codimension one and $T_j = S_j^{\text{cl}}$ denote the closure of S_j . The sets T_j will play an important role in our constructions.

The complement of S_{op} in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ is written as

$$\bigcup_{j \in J} T_j$$

(by Theorem 2 in Section 2). So the set $C(S_{\text{op}})$ is the complement of the infinite family of complex hypersurfaces

$$gT_j^{-1} \quad (j \in J, g \in S'_{\text{op}})$$

and hence the connected component $C(S_{\text{op}})_0$ is Stein.

This domain is sometimes called the “Iwasawa domain” since it is a maximal domain where all Iwasawa decompositions can be holomorphically extended from $G_{\mathbf{R}}$.

In [GM], we defined

$$C = \bigcap C(S)$$

where we take the intersection for all $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbits S on X on all flag manifolds $X = G_{\mathbf{C}}/P$ of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ and conjectured

$$C = \widetilde{D}_0 Z$$

(Conjecture 1.3) where $D_0 = \widetilde{D}_0/K_{\mathbf{C}}$ is the domain introduced by [AG] (which is sometimes denoted as Ω_{AG}) and Z is the center of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$. For connected components, it means

$$C_0 = \widetilde{D}_0. \quad (\text{B})$$

This conjecture (B) was solved recently as follows. It is proved in Proposition 8.3 of [GM] that

$$C_0 = C(S_{\text{op}})_0.$$

In other words, $C(S)_0$ is minimal when $S = S_{\text{op}}$. We believe that it is one of central facts of this theory since it gives a very strong estimate of all $C(S)$ through $C(S_{\text{op}})$ only. So (B) is equivalent to the equality

$$C(S_{\text{op}})_0 = \widetilde{D}_0 \quad (\text{C})$$

which was recently established by many people’s contributions as follows.

The domain $C(S_{\text{op}})_0$ was considered in [BGW] for $SU(p, q)$ (under the name “polar set”) and for general cases in [G]. In [G] was conjectured (C) as well as the coincidence of \widetilde{D}_0 with the universal domain of all analytic extensions from the Riemann symmetric spaces.

In 1999, J. Faraut and T. Kobayashi constructed some Hermitian symmetric domains Ξ_0 containing $G_{\mathbf{R}}/K$ in the classical case and gave a proof for $\Xi_0 \subset C(S_{\text{op}})_0$ in an unpublished note. Using this inclusive relation, they also showed that all the joint eigenfunctions on $G_{\mathbf{R}}/K$ with

respect to $G_{\mathbf{R}}$ -invariant differential operators on $G_{\mathbf{R}}/K$ can be holomorphically extended to the domains Ξ_0 . It is known that Ξ_0 are subdomains of \widetilde{D}_0 and that they coincide in some cases including Hermitian cases (c.f. [BHH], [KS2]).

Later, Krötz and Stanton proved the inclusion

$$\widetilde{D}_0 \subset C(S_{\text{op}})_0 \quad (\text{D})$$

for all classical cases in [KS1] and also applied it to holomorphic extension of solutions of invariant differential operators. Independently, [GM] proved the equality (C) for all classical cases and exceptional Hermitian cases. Huckleberry gave a general proof of the inclusion (D) in [H] using the strictly plurisubharmonicity of a function ρ which is proved in [BHH]. Recently, the second author gave a general proof of (D) without complex analysis ([M4]).

On the other hand, Barchini proved the opposite inclusion $C(S_{\text{op}})_0 \subset \widetilde{D}_0$ by a general argument in [B].

REMARK 1. In [FH], the authors deduce the equality $C_0 = \widetilde{D}_0$ from their result about $C(S)$ for closed S and Proposition 8.1 in [GM]. As we showed above, this equality is already the consequence of Proposition 8.3 in [GM] and the equality (C). So it does not need the results in [FH].

2. Schubert cells in the category of $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - B double cosets.

The principal idea of our considerations in [GM] was that $C(S)_0$ will be essentially independent of neither S nor the flag manifold $X = G_{\mathbf{C}}/P$. To justify it, we need to build bridges between $C(S)$ for different S and for it we need to see connections between different $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbits. It turns out that Schubert cells are very efficient tool for such considerations as in Section 2 and Section 8 in [GM]. They give a possibility to obtain an important information about general $C(S)$ from a consideration of simplest S . Here we refine connections between $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ -orbits and Schubert cells and give more examples of applications.

For a simple root α in the root system with respect to the order defined by B , we can define a parabolic subgroup

$$P_{\alpha} = B \cup Bw_{\alpha}B$$

of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ such that $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} P_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} B + 1$.

LEMMA 1. *Let S_1 be a $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - B double coset. Then we have:*

- (i) *If $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 P_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1$, then $S_1^{\text{cl}} P_{\alpha} = S_1^{\text{cl}}$.*
- (ii) *If $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 P_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 + 1$, then there exists a $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - B double coset S_2 such that $S_1^{\text{cl}} P_{\alpha} = S_2^{\text{cl}}$.*

PROOF. Though this lemma follows easily from [M2] Lemma 3, we will give a proof for the sake of completeness. Write $S_1 = K_{\mathbf{C}}gB$. Then we have a natural bijection

$$(g^{-1}K_{\mathbf{C}}g \cap P_{\alpha}) \backslash P_{\alpha} / B \cong K_{\mathbf{C}} \backslash K_{\mathbf{C}}gP_{\alpha} / B = K_{\mathbf{C}} \backslash S_1 P_{\alpha} / B$$

by the map $x \mapsto gx$.

- (i) If $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 P_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1$, then $(g^{-1}K_{\mathbf{C}}g \cap P_{\alpha})B/B$ is Zariski open in $P_{\alpha}/B = P^1(\mathbf{C})$ and hence it is dense. So we have

$$S_1^{\text{cl}} = (K_{\mathbf{C}}gB)^{\text{cl}} \supset S_1P_{\alpha} \supset S_1$$

and therefore $S_1^{\text{cl}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\alpha}$.

(ii) Suppose $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1P_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 + 1$. Then there exists a $p \in P_{\alpha}$ such that $(g^{-1}K_{\mathbf{C}}g \cap P_{\alpha})pB/B$ is Zariski open in $P_{\alpha}/B = P^1(\mathbf{C})$ since the number of $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double cosets in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ is finite. If we write $S_2 = K_{\mathbf{C}}gpB$, then we have

$$(S_2)^{\text{cl}} \supset S_1P_{\alpha} \supset S_2$$

and therefore $S_2^{\text{cl}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\alpha}$. □

THEOREM 1. *Let S_1 be a $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double coset in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ and w an element of the Weyl group W . Then we have:*

- (i) $S_1^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = S_2^{\text{cl}}$ for some $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double coset S_2 .
- (ii) (minimal expression) *There exists a $w' \in W$ such that $w' \leq w$ (Bruhat order), $\ell(w') = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_2 - \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1$ and that*

$$S_1^{\text{cl}}(Bw'B)^{\text{cl}} = S_2^{\text{cl}}.$$

Here $\ell(w') = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} Bw'B - \dim_{\mathbf{C}} B$ is the length of w' .

PROOF. (i) This follows from Lemma 1 because every Schubert cell $(BwB)^{\text{cl}}$ is written as

$$(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_{\ell}}$$

where $w = w_{\alpha_1} \cdots w_{\alpha_{\ell}}$ is a minimal expression of $w \in W$.

(ii) By Lemma 1, we can choose a subsequence β_1, \dots, β_q ($q = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_2 - \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1$) of $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_{\ell}$ such that

$$\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\beta_1} \cdots P_{\beta_k} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\beta_1} \cdots P_{\beta_{k-1}} + 1$$

for $k = 1, \dots, q$ and that

$$S_2^{\text{cl}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_{\ell}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}P_{\beta_1} \cdots P_{\beta_q} = S_1^{\text{cl}}(Bw'B)^{\text{cl}}$$

with $w' = w_{\beta_1} \cdots w_{\beta_q}$. □

REMARK 2. $S_1^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = S_2^{\text{cl}}$ implies $S_1^{\text{cl}} \subset S_2^{\text{cl}}$. But $S_1^{\text{cl}} \subset S_2^{\text{cl}}$ does not always imply $S_1^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = S_2^{\text{cl}}$ for some w (c.f. [M2]).

DEFINITION 1. For every $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double coset S , we can define, by Theorem 1, a subset $J(S)$ of J by

$$J(S) = \{j \in J \mid S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = T_j \text{ for some } w \in W\}.$$

LEMMA 2. *Let S be a non-open $K_{\mathbf{C}}\text{-}B$ double coset. Then there exists a simple root α such that*

$$\dim_{\mathbf{C}} SP_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S + 1.$$

PROOF. Write $G_{\mathbf{C}} = (Bw_0B)^{\text{cl}} = P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_m}$ with the longest element w_0 in W . If

$$\dim_{\mathbf{C}} SP_{\alpha} = \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S$$

for all simple roots α , then we have, by Lemma 1,

$$G_{\mathbf{C}} = S^{\text{cl}} G_{\mathbf{C}} = S^{\text{cl}} P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_m} = S^{\text{cl}},$$

a contradiction. □

THEOREM 2. *If $\ell(w) < \text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S$, then*

$$S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} \subset T_j$$

for some $j \in J(S)$.

PROOF. Since $\text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = d > 0$, we can choose simple roots $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_{d-1}$ such that

$$\text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_{d-1}} = 1$$

by Lemma 2. Since $(BwB)^{\text{cl}} P_{\alpha_1} \cdots P_{\alpha_{d-1}} = (Bw'B)^{\text{cl}}$ for some $w' \in W$, we have

$$S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} \subset S^{\text{cl}}(Bw'B)^{\text{cl}} = T_j$$

for some $j \in J(S)$. □

3. Applications.

DEFINITION 2. For every subset J' in J , we define a domain $\Omega(J')$ in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ by

$$\Omega(J') = \{x \in G_{\mathbf{C}} \mid xT_j \cap S'_{\text{op}} = \emptyset \text{ for all } j \in J'\}_0.$$

We can prove the following corollary:

COROLLARY. *Let S be a closed $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - P double coset in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$. Write $S = S_1^{\text{cl}}$ with the dense $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - B double coset S_1 in S . Then we have*

$$C(S)_0 = \Omega(J(S_1)).$$

REMARK 3. (i) We can see $C(S_{\text{op}})_0 = \Omega(J)$. By the same argument as for $C(S_{\text{op}})_0$ in Section 1, we can prove $\Omega(J')$ is Stein for every subset J' in J . So the Steinness of $C(S)_0$ ([W]) becomes a corollary of this equivalence $C(S)_0 = \Omega(J(S_1))$ (c.f. [HW]).

(ii) It is clear that $\Omega(J') \supset \Omega(J)$ for every subset J' in J . So we have

$$C(S)_0 \supset C(S_{\text{op}})_0.$$

But this inclusion was already proved in Proposition 8.3 in [GM]. This is natural because the way of proof of the corollary below is essentially the same as that of Proposition 8.3 in [GM]. So the above corollary may be considered as its refinement.

PROOF OF COROLLARY. Let x be an element on the boundary of $C(S)_0$. Then

$$xS \cap S'_2 P \neq \emptyset$$

for some $G_{\mathbf{R}}P$ double coset $S'_2 P$ in the boundary of S' . Here we take S_2 as the dense $K_{\mathbf{C}}B$ double coset contained in $S_2 P$. Since S is right P -invariant, we have

$$xS \cap S'_2 \neq \emptyset \quad \text{and} \quad \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_2 > \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S.$$

Applying Theorem 1 (ii) to the pair $(S_2^{\text{cl}}, G_{\mathbf{C}})$, we can take a $w \in W$ such that $\ell(w) = \text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S_2$ and that

$$S_2^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = G_{\mathbf{C}}.$$

So we have $S_2(BwB)^{\text{cl}} \supset S_{\text{op}}$ and hence

$$S'_2 \subset S'_{\text{op}}(Bw^{-1}B)^{\text{cl}}.$$

Since $xS \cap S'_2 \neq \emptyset$, we have

$$xS \cap S'_{\text{op}}(Bw^{-1}B)^{\text{cl}} \neq \emptyset.$$

Hence

$$xS(BwB)^{\text{cl}} \cap S'_{\text{op}} \neq \emptyset$$

which implies $xT_j \cap S'_{\text{op}} \neq \emptyset$ for some $j \in J(S_1)$ by Theorem 2. Thus $x \notin \Omega(J(S_1))$.

Conversely, suppose

$$xT_j \cap S'_{\text{op}} \neq \emptyset$$

for some $T_j = S(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = S_1^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}}$. Note that $j \in J(S_1)$ by Definition 1 and that we may assume $\ell(w) = \text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S - 1 = \text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S_1 - 1$ by Theorem 1 (ii). Then we have

$$xS \cap S'_{\text{op}}(Bw^{-1}B)^{\text{cl}} \neq \emptyset$$

and hence

$$xS \cap S'_3 \neq \emptyset$$

for some $K_{\mathbf{C}}B$ double coset S_3 such that $S'_3 \subset S'_{\text{op}}(Bw^{-1}B)^{\text{cl}}$. Hence $S_3(BwB)^{\text{cl}} \supset S_{\text{op}}$ and therefore $\dim_{\mathbf{C}} S_3 \geq \dim_{\mathbf{C}} G_{\mathbf{C}} - \ell(w) > \dim_{\mathbf{C}} S$. So we have

$$S'_3 \cap S' = \emptyset$$

because S' is the union of $G_{\mathbf{R}}B$ double cosets S'_4 satisfying $S_4 \subset S$. Hence we have

$$xS \not\subset S'$$

and therefore

$$x \notin C(S).$$

□

REMARK 4. (i) The condition $\ell(w) = \text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S - 1$ does “not always” imply

$$\text{codim}_{\mathbf{C}} S^{\text{cl}}(BwB)^{\text{cl}} = 1.$$

Counter examples exist already for $G_{\mathbf{R}} = SU(2, 1)$.

(ii) The construction of the domain $\Omega(J(S_1))$ is essentially equivalent to the construction of “Schubert domain” in [HW]. We can see that the proof of our corollary using the results in Section 2 is extremely simple. Let us explain the connection between these two constructions introducing notations in [HW].

Take a Borel subgroup B_0 of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ so that $G_{\mathbf{R}}B_0$ is closed in $G_{\mathbf{C}}$. A Borel subgroup B of $G_{\mathbf{C}}$ is called an “Iwasawa Borel subgroup” if

$$B = g_0 B_0 g_0^{-1} \quad \text{for some } g_0 \in G_{\mathbf{R}}.$$

Let $Z = G_{\mathbf{C}}/Q$ be a flag manifold. Then we can take Q so that $Q \supset B_0$. Every Schubert cell Y in Z for B is written as

$$Y = (Bg_0wQ)^{\text{cl}} = (g_0B_0wQ)^{\text{cl}}$$

with some $w \in W$. Let S be a closed $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - Q double coset. (They use the symbol C_0 for S .) The “incidence variety” H_Y is written as

$$H_Y = \{g \mid gS \cap Y \neq \emptyset\} = YS^{-1} = (g_0B_0wQ)^{\text{cl}}S^{-1} = (S(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}}g_0^{-1})^{-1}.$$

If $\text{codim } H_Y = 1$, then

$$H_Y^{-1} = S(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}}g_0^{-1} = T_jg_0^{-1}$$

for some $j \in J' = J(S_1)$ (where S_1 is the dense $K_{\mathbf{C}}$ - B_0 double coset in S) and $g_0 \in G_{\mathbf{R}}$ by our notation.

They defined

$$\mathscr{Y}(S') = \{Y = (g_0B_0wQ)^{\text{cl}} \mid \text{codim } H_Y = 1\}.$$

(They use the symbol D for S' . Note that the condition $Y \subset Z \setminus S'$ follows from $\text{codim } H_Y = 1$ because

$$\begin{aligned} Y \cap S' = \emptyset &\iff S'Y^{-1} = S'(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}}g_0^{-1} \not\ni e \\ &\iff S'(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}} \not\ni g_0 \\ &\iff S'(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}} \cap G_{\mathbf{R}}B_0 = \emptyset \\ &\iff S(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}} \cap K_{\mathbf{C}}B_0 = \emptyset \\ &\iff \text{codim } S(Qw^{-1}B_0)^{\text{cl}} \geq 1. \end{aligned}$$

The Schubert domain is defined as

$$\Omega_S(S') = \left\{ G_{\mathbf{C}} \setminus \left(\bigcup_{Y \in \mathcal{Y}(S')} H_Y \right) \right\}_0.$$

This definition is equivalent to our definition of $\Omega(J')$ because

$$\begin{aligned} g \notin \bigcup_{Y \in \mathcal{Y}(S')} H_Y &\iff g^{-1} \notin T_j g_0^{-1} \text{ for all } j \in J' \text{ and } g_0 \in G_{\mathbf{R}} \\ &\iff g^{-1} G_{\mathbf{R}} B_0 \cap T_j = \emptyset \text{ for all } j \in J' \\ &\iff G_{\mathbf{R}} B_0 \cap g T_j = \emptyset \text{ for all } j \in J'. \end{aligned}$$

REMARK 5. The problem of the description of the domain of cycles $C(S)_0$ for groups $G_{\mathbf{R}}$ of Hermitian type is simpler than the general case. Firstly, in this case, $D_0 = \widetilde{D}_0/K_{\mathbf{C}}$ has a very simple description: $D_0 \cong G_{\mathbf{R}}/K \times \overline{G_{\mathbf{R}}/K}$ (Proposition 2.2 in [GM]). As usual, the equality $C(S)_0 = \widetilde{D}_0$ for $S (\leftrightarrow S')$ of nonholomorphic type is reduced to two inclusions. The proof of $C(S)_0 \subset \widetilde{D}_0$ in [WZ1] had a mistake which was corrected in [WZ2]. The opposite inclusion was checked in [WZ1] for classical Hermitian groups. In Proposition 2.4 of [GM], we gave a very simple proof of this inclusion for arbitrary groups of Hermitian type which is free of case-by-case considerations: the use of Schubert cells makes this fact almost trivial. The note [WZ2] also contains this fact with a proof referred to [HW] but without an appropriate reference on the preceding proof in [GM]. Moreover it asserts a misleading statement that the paper [GM] does not contain a direct proof.

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