

## Intrinsic character of minimal hypersurfaces in flat spaces.

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### Introduction.

A minimal variety in a Riemannian space is defined as a variety which realizes an extremal of the volume integral, and is characterized, from a stand-point of the differential geometry in the small, by the property that the mean curvature vanishes. Although many properties of such spaces immersed in an enveloping space are known, it seems to me that their intrinsic properties have not been yet discussed.

In this paper we investigate the *intrinsic properties of minimal hypersurfaces in flat spaces*. At the beginning of Section 3, the tensors  $S_{p)ij}$  are defined in terms of the curvature tensor and they play an important rôle throughout the paper. The first two sections are devoted to explain how the tensors are derived. In Section 3, by means of these tensors, the coefficients of the second fundamental form are written in terms of the curvature tensor, and then, from the Gauss equation, we obtain the identities which are satisfied by the components of the curvature tensor of a minimal hypersurface.

In Section 4, the classification theorem of minimal hypersurfaces is obtained with the aid of the tensors  $S_{p)ij}$ , and then we get the imbedding theorem of a Riemannian space as a minimal hypersurface in a flat space.

There exists a special class of minimal hypersurfaces, which will be called to be of type  $M^\infty$  and for which we can not determined the coefficients of the second fundamental form by the general method used in Section 3. Any minimal surface of ordinary space belongs to this class. In the final two sections, we shall treat the Einstein spaces, conformally flat spaces, and 3-dimensional spaces as simple examples of such an exceptional case.

§ 1. Minimal hypersurfaces of type  $M^1$ .

We consider a minimal hypersurface  $V^n$  in a flat space and denote by  $H_{ij}$  the second fundamental tensor of  $V^n$ . Then  $H_{ij}$  satisfies the so-called Gauss equation:

$$(1.1) \quad R_{hijk} = e(H_{hj}H_{ik} - H_{hk}H_{ij}), \quad (e = \pm 1),$$

where  $R_{hijk}$  is the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ . It is well known that the necessary and sufficient condition for  $V^n$  to be a minimal hypersurface is that the mean curvature vanishes, that is,

$$(A_0) \quad g^{ij}H_{ij} = 0,$$

where  $g^{ij}$  is the fundamental tensor of  $V^n$ .

Transvecting (1.1) by  $g^{hk}$  and making use of (A<sub>0</sub>), we have

$$(B_1) \quad R_{ij} = -eH_{ia}H_{jb}g^{ab},$$

where  $R_{ij}$  is the Ricci tensor of  $V^n$ . It can be easily verified by direct substitution from (B<sub>1</sub>) that

$$H_{ij}H_{ak}R^a_l = H_{ij}H_{al}R^a_k.$$

Interchanging  $j$  and  $l$ , and subtracting the resulting equation from the above, we have as a consequence of (1.1)

$$(1.2) \quad H_{ij}H_{ak}R^a_l - H_{il}H_{ak}R^a_j = eR_{ailj}R^a_k.$$

Transvection of (1.2) by  $g^{kl}$  yields, in virtue of (B<sub>1</sub>),

$$(C_1) \quad R^{ab}H_{ab}H_{ij} = S_{ij} \equiv e(R_{iajb}R^{ab} - R_{ia}R^a_j).$$

Moreover, transvection of (C<sub>1</sub>) by  $R^{ij}$  leads at once to

$$(D_1) \quad (R^{ab}H_{ab})^2 = S_{ij}R^{ij} \equiv S.$$

In the following we shall assume that the quantity  $S$  does not vanish and say that such a  $V^n$  is of type  $M^1$ . Since we can put  $S = \sigma^{-2}$ , it follows from (D<sub>1</sub>) that  $R^{ab}H_{ab} = \sigma^{-1}$ , and hence we can rewrite (C<sub>1</sub>) as

$$(E_1) \quad H_{ij} = \sigma S_{ij}.$$

As a result we can deduce the expression of  $H_{ij}$  in terms of the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ . By means of the defining expression of  $S_{ij}$  we can immediately show that  $H_{ij}$  as above determined satisfies the characteristic property (A<sub>0</sub>).

Substituting in (1.1) from (E<sub>1</sub>), we obtain

$$(F_1) \quad R_{hijk} = \sigma^2 (S_{hj} S_{ik} - S_{hk} S_{ij}).$$

Consequently the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ , which is of type  $M^1$  and is imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface, must satisfy the equation  $(F_1)$ .

## § 2. Minimal hypersurfaces of type $M^2$ .

If the quantity  $S$  of  $V^n$  as defined by  $(D_1)$  vanishes, then it follows from  $(C_1)$  and  $(D_1)$  that the tensor  $S_{ij}$  must vanish and  $H_{ij}$  satisfies the equation

$$(A_1) \quad R^{ab} H_{ab} = 0.$$

In this case, when we transvect (1.1) by  $R^{hj}$  and make use of  $(A_1)$  and  $S_{ij} = 0$ , the equation

$$(B_2) \quad R_{ia} R^a_j = -e H_{ia} H_{jb} R^{ab}$$

is deduced. Transvecting (1.2) by  $R^{kl}$ , we have by virtue of  $(B_2)$

$$(C_2) \quad R_{2j}^{ab} H_{ab} H_{ij} = S_{2ij},$$

where by definition

$$R_{2j}^{ab} = R_{ia} R^a_j, \quad S_{2ij} = e(R_{iajb} R_{2j}^{ab} - R_{ia} R_{2j}^a).$$

Moreover transvection of  $(C_2)$  by  $R_{2j}^{ij}$  yields

$$(D_2) \quad (R_{2j}^{ab} H_{ab})^2 = S_{2ij} R_{2j}^{ij} \equiv S_2.$$

In the rest of this section we restrict our considerations to a  $V^n$  for which  $S_{ij} = 0$  and  $S_2 \neq 0$ , and we say that such a  $V^n$  is of type  $M^2$ . In this case, since we can put  $S_2 = (\sigma_2)^{-2}$ , it follows from  $(D_2)$  that  $R_{2j}^{ab} H_{ab} = (\sigma_2)^{-1}$ , and hence equations  $(C_2)$  are written as

$$(E_2) \quad H_{ij} = \sigma_2 S_{2ij}.$$

Thus  $H_{ij}$  is expressible in terms of the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ . It is not difficult to verify that  $H_{ij}$  as just defined satisfies the equations  $(A_0)$  and  $(A_1)$ . Inserting the expression  $(E_2)$  of  $H_{ij}$  in (1.1), we have

$$(F_2) \quad R_{hijk} = (\sigma_2)^2 (S_{2hj} S_{2ik} - S_{2hk} S_{2ij}),$$

this having the meaning similar to  $(F_1)$ .

**§ 3. Algebraic properties of minimal hypersurfaces in a flat space.**

In this section we shall generalize the treatments of minimal hypersurfaces as described in the preceding sections. For this purpose it is convenient to introduce the tensors  $R_{p)ij}$  and  $S_{p)ij}$  as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} R_{p)ij} &= R_{ia} R_{p-1) a j}, & R_{1)ij} &= R_{ij}, \\ S_{p)ij} &= e(R_{iajb} R_p^{ab} - R_{p+1)ij}), & S_{1)ij} &= S_{ij}, \\ S_p &= S_{p)ij} R_p^{ij}, & S_1 &= S, \end{aligned}$$

where the index  $p$  takes the values  $1, 2, 3, \dots$ . It is obvious that  $R_{p)ij}$  and consequently  $S_{p)ij}$  are both symmetric tensors. Also we can easily derive equations

$$(3.1) \quad R_{p)ij} R_q^{ij} = R_{r)ij} R_s^{ij}, \quad (p + q = r + s),$$

$$(3.2) \quad g^{ij} S_{p)ij} = 0,$$

$$(3.3) \quad S_{p)ij} R_q^{ij} = S_{q)ij} R_p^{ij}.$$

In consequence of (B<sub>1</sub>) the tensors  $R_{p)ij}$  are expressed in terms of  $H_{ij}$  as

$$(3.4) \quad R_{p)ij} = (-e)^p H_{i_1}^{a_1} H_{a_1}^{a_2} \dots H_{a_{p-2}}^{a_{p-1}} H_{a_{p-1} j}.$$

Substituting from (1.1) and (3.4) in the defining expression of  $S_{p)ij}$ , we have

$$(3.5) \quad S_{p)ij} = (-e)^p e H_{2p+1} H_{ij},$$

where by definition

$$H_{2p+1} = H_{a_0}^{a_0} H_{a_0}^{a_1} \dots H_{a_{p-2}}^{a_{p-1}} H_{a_{p-1}}^{a_p}, \quad H_1 = H_a^a.$$

The discussions of the first and second sections lead us to the following definition.

DEFINITION. *If a Riemannian space  $V^n$  is such that the equations*

$$S_{1)ij} = \dots = S_{r-1)ij} = 0, \quad S_r \neq 0$$

*are satisfied, then  $V^n$  is said to be of type  $M^r$ , regardless  $V^n$  is a minimal hypersurface in a flat space or not.*

In the following we shall treat a minimal hypersurface  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$ . From (3.5) it follows that

$$(3.6) \quad S_r = (-1)^r e H_{2r+1} H_{ij} R_r^{ij}.$$

Hence, for  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$ , we have in consequence of (A<sub>0</sub>), (3.5) and (3.6),

$$(3.7) \quad H_1 = H_3 = \dots = H_{2r-1} = 0, \quad H_{2r+1} \neq 0,$$

$$(3.8) \quad R_r)^{ij} H_{ij} \neq 0,$$

From (3.3) and (3.5) it follows that

$$S_r)_{ij} R_p)^{ij} = (-1)^r e H_{2r+1} R_p)^{ij} H_{ij} = S_p)_{ij} R_r)^{ij},$$

and hence, for  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$ , we have by virtue of (3.7)

$$(A_p) \quad R_p)^{ij} H_{ij} = 0, \quad (p=1, \dots, r-1).$$

Now we shall find the similar expression of  $H_{ij}$  of  $V^n$  with (E<sub>1</sub>) and (E<sub>2</sub>). The equation (3.4) gives

$$(B_r) \quad R_r)_{ij} = -e H_{ia} H_{jb} R_{r-1})^{ab}$$

Transvecting (1.2) by  $R_{r-1})^{kl}$  and making use of (B<sub>r</sub>), we obtain

$$H_{ij} H_{ak} R^a)_l R_{r-1})^{kl} = e R_{ailj} R^a)_k R_{r-1})^{kl} - e R^a)_j R_{r-1})_{ai} = S_r)_{ij},$$

from which it follows that

$$(C_r) \quad H_{ij} R_r)^{ab} H_{ab} = S_r)_{ij}.$$

Furthermore transvection by  $R_r)^{ij}$  gives

$$(D_r) \quad (R_r)^{ab} H_{ab})^2 = S_r).$$

Since, by hypotheses  $S_r \neq 0$ , we can put  $S_r = (\sigma_r)^{-2}$ , then (C<sub>r</sub>) is written in the form

$$(E_r) \quad H_{ij} = \sigma_r S_r)_{ij}.$$

As a result we have the expression of  $H_{ij}$  in terms of the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ . From (3.2) and (3.3) it is clear that  $H_{ij}$  as defined satisfies (A<sub>p</sub>) ( $p=0, 1, \dots, r-1$ ). Substituting in (1.1) from (E<sub>r</sub>), we get

$$(F_r) \quad R_{hijk} = (\sigma_r)^2 (S_r)_{hj} S_r)_{ik} - S_r)_{hk} S_r)_{ij}.$$

These facts permit us to state

**THEOREM 1.** *If a  $V^n$  is of type  $M^r$  and a minimal hypersurface of a flat space, then the equation (F<sub>p</sub>) is satisfied and the coefficients  $H_{ij}$  of the second fundamental form of  $V^n$  are expressed as (E<sub>r</sub>) in terms of the curvature tensor of  $V^n$ .*

It is to be remarked that there exists such a Riemannian space that the tensors  $S_p)_{ij}$  vanish for all indices  $p$ . As an example, we

have any Einstein space and hence any 2-dimensional Riemannian space, as easily verified by direct calculation with the aid of the equation  $R_{ij} = (R/n)g_{ij}$ . We shall say that such a space is of type  $M^\infty$ , for which the above theorem can not be applied.

**§ 4. Classification of minimal hypersurfaces in a flat space.**

The principal normal curvatures  $\rho_a$  of a hypersurface  $V^n$  are defined as the roots of the determinantal equation

$$|\rho g_{ij} - H_{ij}| = 0.$$

Let  $\lambda_{a,i}$  be the orthogonal ennuple determined by the equation

$$(\rho_a g_{ij} - H_{ij}) \lambda_{a,j} = 0$$

Then the tensors  $g_{ij}$  and  $H_{ij}$  are respectively written in the following forms:

$$g_{ij} = \sum_{a=1}^n e_a \lambda_{a,i} \lambda_{a,j}, \quad H_{ij} = \sum_{a=1}^n e_a \rho_a \lambda_{a,i} \lambda_{a,j}, \quad (e_a = \pm 1),$$

from which we have

$$H_p = H_{a_1}^{a_1} H_{a_2}^{a_2} \dots H_{a_p}^{a_p} = \sum_{a=1}^n (\rho_a)^p.$$

Therefore (3.7) are expressed in terms of  $\rho_a$  as

$$\sum_{a=1}^n (\rho_a)^p = 0, \quad (p = 1, 3, \dots, 2r - 1),$$

(4.1)

$$\sum_{a=1}^n (\rho_a)^{2r+1} = 0.$$

We put  $P_\alpha = \sum_{a=1}^n (\rho_a)^\alpha$  and denote by  $p_\alpha$  the elementary symmetric function of degree  $\alpha$  ( $\alpha = 1, \dots, n$ ) with respect to  $\rho_a$ . Following the theory of the symmetric polynomials, these polynomials  $P_\alpha$  can be written in terms of  $p_\alpha$  by means of the Newton formula [1] as follows:

$$P_\alpha + \sum_{\beta=1}^{\alpha-1} (-1)^\beta p_\beta P_{\alpha-\beta} + (-1)^\alpha \alpha p_\alpha = 0, \quad (\alpha = 1, 2, \dots),$$

(4.2)

where by definition

$$p_\alpha = 0, \quad (\alpha > n).$$

(4.3)

Making use of (4.2) and applying the mathematical inductions, we can readily prove the following

LEMMA. *If  $P_1 = P_3 = \dots = P_{2p-1} = 0$ , then  $p_1 = p_3 = \dots = p_{2p-1} = 0$ , and  $P_{2p+1} = (2p+1)p_{2p+1}$ .*

For a minimal hypersurface  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$ , it follows from (4.1) and the lemma that

$$p_1 = p_3 = \dots = p_{2r-1} = 0, \quad p_{2r+1} \neq 0.$$

But, it follows from (4.3) that  $p_{2r+1} = 0$  ( $2r+1 > n$ ), so that we have

THEOREM 2 (CLASSIFICATION THEOREM). *The only type numbers  $M^r$  of minimal hypersurfaces of an  $(n+1)$ -dimensional flat space are equal to  $M^1, \dots, M^p$  ( $2p+1 \leq n$ ) or  $M^\infty$ . For a  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$  ( $r = \text{finite or infinite}$ ), the equations*

$$p_1 = p_3 = \dots = p_{2r-1} = 0, \quad p_{2r+1} \neq 0$$

are satisfied, where  $p_\alpha$  ( $\alpha \leq n$ ) are the elementary symmetric functions of degree  $\alpha$  with respect to the principal normal curvatures of  $V^n$  and by definition  $p_\alpha = 0$  ( $\alpha > n$ ).

### § 5. Imbedding of Riemannian spaces in flat spaces as minimal hypersurfaces.

From Theorem 1 it follows that a necessary condition for a Riemannian  $n$ -space  $V^n$  of type  $M^r$  to be imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface is that the equation  $(F_r)$  be satisfied, and then the solution  $(H_{ij})$  of the system of the equations  $(A_0)$  and (1.1) is uniquely determined by  $(E_r)$ .

It is well known that a  $V^n$  can be imbedded in a flat  $(n+1)$ -space, if and only if there exist  $H_{ij}$  which satisfies the Gauss and Codazzi equations. The equation  $(F_r)$  is equivalent to the Gauss equation. On the other hand, substitution from  $(E_r)$  in the Codazzi equation, that is,

$$(5.1) \quad H_{ij,k} - H_{ik,j} = 0$$

yields

$$(5.2) \quad S_{rij} \frac{\partial \log \sigma_r}{\partial x^k} - S_{rik} \frac{\partial \log \sigma_r}{\partial x^j} + S_{rij,k} - S_{rik,j} = 0.$$

T. Y. Thomas [2] proved that if the matrix  $(H_{ij})$  is of rank  $\geq 4$ , then

the Codazzi equation is a consequence of the Gauss equation. This theorem and the above results enable us to establish the

**THEOREM 3 (IMBEDDING THEOREM).** *Let  $V^n$  be a Riemannian  $n$ -space of type  $M^r$  and the rank of the matrix  $(S_{r,ij})$  be more than 3. The necessary and sufficient condition that  $V^n$  be imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface is that the equation  $(F_r)$  be satisfied. On the other hand, if the matrix is of rank 2 or 3, then the further condition (5.2) must be added.*

If the matrix  $(S_{r,ij})$  is of rank 1, then it follows from  $(F_r)$  that the curvature tensor vanishes, so that we have a contradiction to the assumption  $S_r \neq 0$ . This fact permits us to state

**THEOREM 4.** *There exists no minimal hypersurface of type  $M^r$  in a flat space for which the matrix  $(S_{r,ij})$  is of rank 1.*

### § 6. Einstein spaces as minimal hypersurfaces in flat spaces.

As already remarked at the end of Section 3, any Einstein space is of type  $M^\infty$ , and so Theorem 3 can not be applied to the space. However, C. B. Allendoerfer gave a necessary and sufficient condition that an Einstein space of  $n (\geq 4)$ -dimensions having non-vanishing scalar curvature  $R$  may be imbedded in a flat  $(n+1)$ -space [3]. Then he deduced the equation

$$(6.1) \quad H_{hi} H_{jk} = \frac{eR}{n(n-2)} g_{hi} g_{jk} + \frac{en}{2R(n-2)} (R_a{}^b{}_{hj} R_b{}^a{}_{ik} - 2R_h{}^a{}_{ib} R_j{}^b{}_{ka}),$$

from which  $H_{ij}$  are determined. When an Einstein  $V^n$  is a minimal hypersurface in a flat space, then we have from (6.1) by transvection with  $g^{hi}$

$$(6.2) \quad R^{abc}{}_i R_{abcj} = \frac{n-1}{n^2} eR^2 g_{ij}.$$

Therefore we obtain

**THEOREM 5.** *Let  $V^n (n \geq 4)$  be an Einstein space whose scalar curvature  $R$  does not vanish. If  $V^n$  is imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface, then the equation (6.2) is satisfied.*



**§ 7. Minimal hypersurfaces of 3-dimensions, and those  
which are conformal to a flat space.**

We consider a conformally flat space  $V^n$  ( $n \geq 4$ ). The curvature tensor is expressed as

$$(7.1) \quad R_{hijk} = g_{hj} l_{ik} - g_{hk} l_{ij} + g_{ik} l_{hj} - g_{ij} l_{hk},$$

where we have put

$$l_{ij} = \frac{1}{n-2} \left( R_{ij} - \frac{R}{2(n-1)} g_{ij} \right).$$

It is well known that any 3-dimensional space satisfies (7.1). We now first treat the spaces for which (7.1) is satisfied, and which are not necessarily minimal hypersurfaces.

From (7.1) and the defining expression of  $S_{ij}$  it follows that

$$(7.2) \quad S_{ij} = \frac{en}{n-2} (\alpha g_{ij} + \beta R_{ij} - R_{2ij}),$$

where by definition

$$\alpha = \frac{1}{n} \left( R_{2a}^a - \frac{R^2}{n-1} \right), \quad \beta = \frac{R}{n-1}.$$

If  $S_{ij}$  vanishes, then (7.2) gives

$$(7.3) \quad R_{2ij} = \alpha g_{ij} + \beta R_{ij}.$$

We shall generally prove the following equations:

$$(7.4) \quad R_{p)ij} = \alpha_{p-1} g_{ij} + \beta_{p-1} R_{ij}, \quad (p \geq 2).$$

Indeed, if we suppose that (7.4) holds good, then we obtain from the definition of  $R_{p+1)ij}$

$$R_{p+1)ij} = \alpha_{p-1} R_{ij} + \beta_{p-1} R_{2ij}.$$

Substitution from (7.3) gives

$$R_{p+1)ij} = \alpha_p g_{ij} + \beta_p R_{ij},$$

where we have put

$$(7.5) \quad \alpha_p = \alpha \beta_{p-1}, \quad \beta_p = \alpha_{p-1} + \beta \beta_{p-1}.$$

Hence (7.4) has been established and we now have the relation (7.5). As a consequence of (7.4) and (7.5), we have  $S_{p)ij} = 0$  ( $p=2, \dots$ ), provided  $S_{ij} = 0$ . (We have already seen this fact for a  $V^3$  at the end of Section 4.)

When we denote the Ricci principal directions by  $\lambda_{a,i}$ , the tensors  $g_{ij}$  and  $R_{ij}$  are expressible as follows:

$$g_{ij} = \sum_{a=1}^n e_a \lambda_{a,i} \lambda_{a,j}, \quad R_{ij} = \sum_{a=1}^n e_a \tau_a \lambda_{a,i} \lambda_{a,j}, \quad (e_a = \pm 1),$$

where  $\tau_a$  are the mean curvatures of  $V^n$  for the direction  $\lambda_{a,i}$ . Inserting these in (7.3), it can be seen that  $\tau_a$  must satisfy

$$(7.6) \quad \tau_i^2 = \frac{1}{n} \left[ \sum_{a=1}^n \tau_a^2 - \frac{1}{n-1} \left( \sum_{a=1}^n \tau_a \right)^2 \right] + \frac{\tau_i}{n-1} \sum_{a=1}^n \tau_a,$$

from which it is readily concluded that there exist only two following cases:

(1) All of the mean curvatures  $\tau_i$  are equal. In this case  $V^n$  is clearly an Einstein space, so that, according to a theorem due to J. A. Schouten and D. J. Struik [4],  $V^n$  is of constant curvature.

(2)  $\tau_1 = \dots = \tau_r = \tau$ ,  $\tau_{r+1} = \dots = \tau_n = \tau'$ ,  $\tau \neq \tau'$ , ( $1 \leq r < n$ ), and  $\tau$  and  $\tau'$  satisfy the relation

$$(n-r-1)\tau + (r-1)\tau' = 0.$$

Gathering the above results we have

**THEOREM 6.** *If a  $V^n$  is of 3-dimensions or conformally flat ( $n \geq 4$ ), and such that the tensor  $S_{ij}$  vanishes, then all of the tensors  $S_{p,ij}$  vanish, and the equation (7.3) holds good. Such a  $V^n$  is of constant curvature or such that the mean curvatures  $\tau_i$  are related as given by (2) above.*

We return to the consideration of a  $V^3$  or a conformally flat  $V^n$  ( $n \geq 4$ ), which is not of constant curvature (the case (2)) and may be imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface. It was shown by the present author [5] that the tensor

$$K_{ij} = n l_{ij} - l g_{ij}, \quad (l = l^i_i),$$

has the property that the determinant  $|K_{ij}|$  does not vanish and

$$K_{ij} H_{hk} - K_{hk} H_{ij} = 0.$$

From these facts it follows easily that there exists a scalar  $\pi \neq 0$ , satisfying the equation

$$(7.7) \quad H_{ij} = \pi K_{ij}.$$

Substitution in (1.1) from (7.7) gives

$$(7.8) \quad R_{hijk} = \pi^2 (K_{hj} K_{ik} - K_{hk} K_{ij}),$$

from which we obtain a necessary condition for a  $V^n$  under consideration to be a minimal hypersurface as follows:

$$(7.9) \quad \begin{vmatrix} R_{abcd} & K_{ac} K_{bd} - K_{ad} K_{bc} \\ R_{hijk} & K_{hj} K_{ik} - K_{hk} K_{ij} \end{vmatrix} = 0.$$

Conversely, if (7.9) is satisfied, then there exist non-trivial  $p$  and  $q$  such that

$$p R_{hijk} = q (K_{hj} K_{ik} - K_{hk} K_{ij}).$$

It is easily verified by means of  $|K_{ij}| \neq 0$  that  $p$  does not vanish, so that we can obtain the quantity  $\pi$  satisfying (7.8) and further define  $H_{ij}$  by (7.7), which is the solution of the system of equations (1.1) and (A<sub>0</sub>). Consequently, making use of a theorem due to T. Y. Thomas mentioned in Section 5, we are led to conclusion that

**THEOREM 7.** *Let  $V^n$  ( $n \geq 4$ ) be conformal to a flat space and not of constant curvature. The necessary and sufficient condition that  $V^n$  be imbedded in a flat space as a minimal hypersurface is that the determinant  $|K_{ij}| \neq 0$  and (7.9) hold good.*

On the other hand, for a  $V^3$ , the Codazzi equation should be taken into account. Substituting in (5.1) from (7.7), we get

$$(7.10) \quad K_{ij} \frac{\partial \log \pi}{\partial x^k} - K_{ik} \frac{\partial \log \pi}{\partial x^j} + K_{ij,k} - K_{ik,j} = 0.$$

For a  $V^3$  conformal to a flat space, (7.10) is written in a simpler form. Since

$$\begin{aligned} K_{ij,k} - K_{ik,j} = & \left( R_{ij,k} - R_{ik,j} + \frac{1}{4} R_{,j} g_{ik} - \frac{1}{4} R_{,k} g_{ij} \right) \\ & + l_{,j} g_{ik} - l_{,k} g_{ij}, \end{aligned}$$

and the term in parentheses vanishes for such a  $V^3$ , (7.10) is now reducible to the following:

$$(7.11) \quad K_{ij} \frac{\partial \log \pi}{\partial x^k} - K_{ik} \frac{\partial \log \pi}{\partial x^j} = g_{ij} \frac{\partial l}{\partial x^k} - g_{ik} \frac{\partial l}{\partial x^j}.$$

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