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On the Spitzer and Chung laws of the iterated logarithm for Brownian motion

by

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1. Introduction.

Let $\{W(t); t \geq 0\}$ be a two-dimensional Brownian motion. It is well-known that the Brownian path is almost surely dense in the plane, but never hits a given point at positive time. A natural question is thus to study the rate with which the small values of $\|W - x\|$ (the symbol " $\|\cdot\|$ " denoting the usual Euclidean modulus) approach 0 for any $x \in \mathbb{R}^2$. Without loss of generality, we assume W(0) = (1,0) and x = (0,0). Let

$$X(t) = \inf_{0 \le s \le t} ||W(s)||, \quad t > 0.$$

The following celebrated Spitzer (1958) integral test characterizes the lower functions of X:

Theorem A (Spitzer 1958). For any non-decreasing function f > 1,

$$\mathbb{P}\Big[\ X(t) < \frac{t^{1/2}}{f(t)}, \text{ i.o. } \Big] = \begin{cases} 0 & \iff \int^{\infty} \frac{dt}{t \log f(t)} \begin{cases} < \infty \\ = \infty \end{cases}.$$

Here and in the sequel, "i.o." stands for "infinitely often" as t tends to infinity.

Spitzer's Theorem A answers the how-small-are-the-small-values-of-||W|| question. We propose to study the corresponding "how big" problem for the small values. Our Theorem 1, stated as follows, provides a characterization of the upper functions of X.

Theorem 1. If g > 1 is non-decreasing, then

$$\mathbb{P}\left[X(t) > \exp\left(-\frac{\log t}{g(t)}\right), \text{ i.o. }\right] = \begin{cases} 0 & \iff \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dt}{t \, g(t) \log t} dt \end{cases} \begin{cases} < \infty \\ = \infty \end{cases}.$$

Theorems A and 1 together give an accurate description of the almost sure asymptotic behaviours of X. For example, it is immediately seen from the aboves theorems that

$$\mathbb{P}\left[X(t) > \exp\left(-\frac{\log t}{(\log \log t)^a}\right), \text{ i.o. }\right] = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } a > 1; \\ 1 & \text{otherwise} \end{cases}$$

$$\mathbb{P}\Big[\ X(t) < \exp\Big(- (\log t) (\log \log t)^a \ \Big), \text{ i.o.} \ \Big] = \left\{ \begin{matrix} 0 & \text{if } a > 1; \\ 1 & \text{otherwise.} \end{matrix} \right.$$

What about the lower functions of the big values of Brownian motion? Let us recall the classical Chung (1948) integral test for linear Brownian motion.

Theorem B (Chung 1948). Let B be a real-valued Brownian motion. For every non-decreasing function h > 0 such that $t^{-1/2}h(t)$ is non-increasing, we have

$$\mathbb{P}\Big[\sup_{0\leq s\leq t}|B(s)|<\frac{t^{1/2}}{h(t)}, \text{ i.o.}\Big]=\begin{cases}0\\1\end{cases}\iff \int^{\infty}\frac{dt}{t}h^2(t)\exp\Big(-\frac{\pi^2}{8}h^2(t)\Big)\begin{cases}<\infty\\=\infty\end{cases}$$

Chung's Theorem B was obtained for linear Brownian motion. The following natural question was raised by Révész (1990, p.195): for the planar Brownian motion W, what can be said on the liminf behaviour of $\sup_{0 \le s \le t} \|W(s)\|$?

The same question can be asked for a Brownian motion of any dimension. Let $\{V(t); t \geq 0\}$ denote a d-dimensional Brownian motion, and let

$$Y(t) = \sup_{0 \le s \le t} ||V(s)||, \quad t > 0.$$

Our answer to the problem is the following

Theorem 2. Let $d \ge 1$ and let h > 0 be a non-decreasing function. Then

$$\mathbb{P}\left[Y(t) < \frac{t^{1/2}}{h(t)}, \text{ i.o.}\right] = \begin{cases} 0 & \iff \int^{\infty} dt \, \frac{h^2(t)}{t} \exp\left(-\frac{j_{\nu}^2}{2}h^2(t)\right) \begin{cases} < \infty \\ = \infty \end{cases},$$

where j_{ν} denotes the smallest positive zero of the Bessel function $J_{\nu}(x)$ of index $\nu \equiv (d-2)/2$.

Remarks. (i) Since $j_{-1/2} = \pi/2$, Theorem B is a special case of the above result.

- (ii) An interesting feature in Theorem 2 is that we do not suppose $t^2/h(t)$ to be non-decreasing. Thus the latter condition can be removed from Chung's Theorem B.
- (iii) As usual, Theorem 2 has a "local" version for t tending to 0, of which the statement and proof are omitted.

Corollary 1. We have, for $d \ge 1$,

(1.1)
$$\liminf_{t \to \infty} \left(\frac{\log \log t}{t} \right)^{1/2} Y(t) = \frac{j_{\nu}}{2^{1/2}} \quad a.s. ,$$

with rate of convergence

$$\liminf_{t\to\infty} \frac{(\log\log t)^{3/2}}{t^{1/2}\log\log\log t} \Big(Y(t) - \frac{j_{\nu}}{2^{1/2}} \frac{t^{1/2}}{(\log\log t)^{1/2}}\Big) = -\frac{j_{\nu}}{2^{1/2}}, \quad \text{a.s.}$$

Remark. The LIL (1.1) was previously obtained by Lévy (1953) for d = 2 and by Ciesielski & Taylor (1962) for any dimension d.

Theorem 1 is proved in Section 2, and Theorem 2 in Section 3.

2. The proof of Theorem 1.

Let W be as before a Brownian motion in the plane, starting from (1,0). Define

$$H(x) = \inf\{t > 0 : ||W(t)|| = x\}, \quad 0 < x < 1,$$

the first hitting time of ||W|| at level x. Obviously the process $y \mapsto H(1/y)$ (for $y \ge 1$) is increasing, and it has independent increments by using the strong Markov property of ||W||. Since

$$H(2^{-n}) = \sum_{k=1}^{n} \left(H(2^{-k}) - H(2^{-(k-1)}) \right),$$

using Brownian scaling gives

$$H(2^{-n}) = \sum_{k=1}^{n} 2^{-2(k-1)} \xi_k,$$

where $(\xi_k)_{k\geq 1}$ is an i.i.d. sequence of random variables having the same law as H(1/2). Consequently,

(2.1)
$$2^{-2(n-1)} \sum_{k=1}^{n} \xi_k \le H(2^{-n}) \le \sum_{k=1}^{n} \xi_k.$$

Let us first establish a preliminary result for the partial sum of (ξ_k) :

Lemma 1. Let $\{\Lambda(t); t \geq 0\}$ be a subordinator, and assume that $\Lambda(1)$ has the same law as H(1/2). Then for any function f > 1 such that f(t)/t is non-decreasing, we have

$$\limsup_{t \to \infty} \frac{\Lambda(t)}{f(t)} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{, a.s. } \iff \int^{\infty} \frac{dt}{\log f(t)} \begin{cases} < \infty \\ = \infty \end{cases}.$$

Proof of Lemma 1. The Laplace transform of H(1/2) is well-known (see Kent (1978 Theorem 3.1)):

$$\mathbb{E}\exp\bigl(-\lambda H(1/2)\bigr) = \frac{K_0(\sqrt{2\lambda})}{K_0(\sqrt{\lambda/2})}, \quad \forall \lambda > 0,$$

where K_0 is the modified Bessel function. Recall that $\Lambda(1)$ has the same law as H(1/2). Write

$$\mathbb{E}\exp\bigl(-\lambda\Lambda(1)\bigr)=\exp\bigl(-\Psi(\lambda)\bigr).$$

Thus

$$\Psi(\lambda) = \log K_0(\sqrt{\lambda/2}) - \log K_0(\sqrt{2\lambda}).$$

Using elementary asymptotics of K_0 , we immediately arrive at the following estimate

$$\Psi(\lambda) - \lambda \Psi'(\lambda) \sim \frac{2 \log 2}{\log(1/\lambda)}, \quad \lambda \to 0,$$

(the usual symbol " $a(x) \sim b(x)$ " $(x \to x_0)$ means $\lim_{x \to x_0} a(x)/b(x) = 1$). Now the statement of Lemma 1 follows by applying a general result for subordinators (see for example Fristedt (1974 Theorem 6.1)) which tells that $\limsup_{t \to \infty} \Lambda(t)/f(t) = 0$ or ∞ (almost surely) according as

$$\int^{\infty} \left(\Psi(\frac{1}{f(t)}) - \frac{1}{f(t)} \Psi'(\frac{1}{f(t)}) \right) dt$$

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converges or diverges.

Lemma 2. If h > 1 is a non-decreasing function with $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} dt/h(t) = \infty$, then

$$\int^{\infty} \frac{dt}{t + h(t)} = \infty.$$

Proof of Lemma 2. The proof is briefly sketched, since it involves only elementary computations. Set $A = \{t : h(t) \le t\}$ and $B = \{t : h(t) > t\}$. Obviously, we have

$$\frac{1}{t+h(t)} \geq \frac{1}{2} \left(\frac{1}{t} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{A}}(t) + \frac{1}{h(t)} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{B}}(t) \right).$$

Assume $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{A}}(t)(dt/t) < \infty$. We only have to show $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{B}}(t)(dt/h(t)) = \infty$. Write $F_{\mathcal{A}}(t) \equiv \int_{1}^{t} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{A}}(s)ds$. Using integration by parts for $\int \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{A}}(s)(ds/s)$, it is seen that $t \mapsto F_{\mathcal{A}}(t)/t$ is a Cauchy family for t > 1. Thus $\lim_{t \to \infty} F_{\mathcal{A}}(t)/t$ exists. If $\lim_{t \to \infty} F_{\mathcal{A}}(t)/t > 0$, then $\int_{1}^{t} F_{\mathcal{A}}(s)(ds/s^{2})$ would diverge, which contredicts the convergence of $\int_{1}^{\infty} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{A}}(s)(ds/s)$ (the latter is obviously greater than $\int_{1}^{t} F_{\mathcal{A}}(s)(ds/s^{2})$ by integration by parts). Consequently, $\lim_{t \to \infty} F_{\mathcal{A}}(t)/t = 0$. Thus $\int_{1}^{t} \mathbb{1}_{\mathcal{B}}(s)ds \geq t/2$ for sufficiently large t. Again using integration by parts, we obtain

$$\int_1^t 1\!\!1_{\mathcal{B}}(t) \frac{ds}{h(s)} \geq \frac{1}{2} \int_1^t \frac{ds}{h(s)} + \text{ a finite term,}$$

which diverges as t tends to infinity. Lemma 2 is proved.

Proof of Theorem 1. Pick 0 < x < 1, and let us write $2^{-n} \le x \le 2^{-(n-1)}$ (which means $(n-1)\log 2 \le \log(1/x) \le n\log 2$). Then $H(2^{-(n-1)}) \le H(x) \le H(2^{-n})$. Using (2.1), we have

$$(2.2) x^2 \Lambda \Big(\log(1/x)/\log 2 - 1 \Big) \le H(x) \le \Lambda \Big(\log(1/x)/\log 2 + 1 \Big).$$

First, we show the following integral test for H:

(2.3)
$$\limsup_{x \to 0^+} \frac{H(x)}{f(x)} = \begin{cases} 0 \\ \infty \end{cases}, \text{ a.s. } \iff \int_{0^+} \frac{dx}{x \log f(x)} \begin{cases} < \infty \\ = \infty \end{cases},$$

for any function f>1 such that $\log f(x)/\log(1/x)$ is non-increasing. Indeed, assume that $\int_{0^+} dx/\big(x\log f(x)\big)$ converges. Define $\hat{f}(t)=f\big(2^{-t/2}\big)$. Then $\hat{f}(t)/t$ is non-decreasing, with $\int^\infty dt/\log \hat{f}(t)<\infty$. By Lemma 1, we have $\limsup_{t\to\infty}\Lambda(t)/\hat{f}(t)=0$, with probability 1. Thus $\limsup_{t\to\infty}\Lambda(t)/f(2^{-(t-1)})=0$. Using the second part of (2.2), this implies $\limsup_{x\to 0^+}H(x)/f(x)=0$. It remains to verify the divergent half of (2.3). Suppose $\int_{0^+} dx/\big(x\log f(x)\big)=\infty$. Then $\int^\infty dt/\log f\big(2^{-2(t+1)}\big)$ diverges as well. According to Lemma 2, this implies

$$\int^{\infty} \frac{dt}{\log \tilde{f}(t)} = \infty,$$

for $\tilde{f}(t) \equiv 2^{2(t+1)} f\left(2^{-2(t+1)}\right)$. Applying Lemma 1 gives $\limsup_{t \to \infty} \Lambda(t)/\tilde{f}(t) = \infty$, which, by means of the first part of (2.2), yields $\limsup_{x \to 0^+} H(x)/f(x) = \infty$. Hence (2.3) is proved. By noting [H(x) > t] = [X(t) > x] (for any 0 < x < 1 and t > 0), several lines of standard calculation readily confirm that the integral test (2.3) is equivalent to that in Theorem 1.

3. The proof of Theorem 2.

In this section, V denotes a d-dimensional Brownian motion, which, without loss of generality, is assumed to start from 0. Let $H(x) = \inf\{t > 0 : ||V(t)|| = x\}$ (for x > 0). The proof of Theorem 2 is essentially based on the following exact density function of H(1) due to Ciesielski & Taylor (1962):

$$\mathbb{P}\left[H(1) \in dt\right]/dt = \frac{1}{2^{\nu}\Gamma(\nu+1)} \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} \frac{j_{\nu,n}^{\nu+1}}{J_{\nu+1}(j_{\nu,n})} \exp\left(-\frac{j_{\nu,n}^2}{2}t\right), \quad t > 0,$$

where $\nu = (d-2)/2$, and $0 < j_{\nu,1} < j_{\nu,2} < \cdots$ are the positive zeros of the Bessel function J_{ν} (and of course $J_{\nu+1}$ denotes the Bessel function of index $\nu+1$). Let Y be as before the supremum process of ||V||. By Brownian scaling, we have, for any x > 0,

$$\mathbb{P}\left[Y(1) < x\right] = \mathbb{P}\left[H(x) > 1\right] = \mathbb{P}\left[H(1) > 1/x^{2}\right] \\
= \frac{2^{1-\nu}}{\Gamma(\nu+1)} \sum_{r=1}^{\infty} \frac{1}{j_{\nu,n}^{1-\nu} J_{\nu+1}(j_{\nu,n})} \exp\left(-\frac{j_{\nu,n}^{2}}{2x^{2}}\right),$$

which implies

(3.1)
$$\mathbb{P}\left[Y(1) < x\right] \sim \frac{2^{1-\nu}}{\Gamma(\nu+1)j_{\nu}^{1-\nu}J_{\nu+1}(j_{\nu})} \exp\left(-\frac{j_{\nu}^2}{2x^2}\right), \text{ as } x \to 0,$$

(recall that $j_{\nu} \equiv j_{\nu,1}$ is the smallest positive zero of J_{ν}). Write in the sequel $\rho \equiv j_{\nu}^2/2$.

Let h > 0 be a non-decreasing function. In the rest of the note, generic constants will be denoted by K_i $(1 \le i \le 9)$.

We begin with the convergent part of Theorem 2, which is an immediate consequence of the tail estimation (3.1). Indeed, pick a sufficiently large initial value t_0 and define the sequence $(t_k)_{k\geq 1}$ by $t_{k+1}=(1+h^{-2}(t_k))t_k$ for $k=0,1,2,\cdots$, and write $h_k\equiv h(t_k)$ for notational convenience. Obviously t_k increases to infinity (as $k\to\infty$). Assume that $\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} (dt/t)h^2(t)\exp(-\rho h^2(t))$ converges. This implies, by several lines of elementary calculation, the convergence of $\sum_k \exp(-\rho h_k^2)$. From (3.1) and scaling it follows that

$$\mathbb{P}\left[Y(t_k) < \frac{t_k^{1/2}}{h_k - 1/h_k}\right] = \mathbb{P}\left[Y(1) < \frac{1}{h_k - 1/h_k}\right]$$

$$\leq K_1 \exp\left(-\rho(h_k - 1/h_k)^2\right)$$

$$\leq K_2 \exp\left(-\rho h_k^2\right),$$

which sums. According to Borel-Cantelli lemma, (almost surely) for large $k, Y(t_k) \ge t_k^{1/2}/(h_k-1/h_k)$. Let $t \in [t_k,t_{k+1}]$. Then by our construction of (t_k) ,

$$Y(t) \ge Y(t_k) \ge \frac{t_k^{1/2}}{h_k - 1/h_k} = \frac{t_{k+1}^{1/2}}{(1 + 1/h_k^2)(h_k - 1/h_k)} \ge \frac{t_{k+1}^{1/2}}{h_k} \ge \frac{t^{1/2}}{h(t)},$$

which yields the convergent part of Theorem 2.

It remains to show the divergent part. Let h be such that

(3.2)
$$\int_{-\infty}^{\infty} \frac{dt}{t} h^2(t) \exp(-\rho h^2(t)) = \infty.$$

In view of (1.1), we assume without loss of generality that

(3.3)
$$\frac{(\log \log t)^{1/2}}{(2\rho)^{1/2}} \le h(t) \le \frac{(2\log \log t)^{1/2}}{\rho^{1/2}} .$$

Define $t_k = \exp(k/\log k)$ (for $k \ge k_0$) and write as before $h_k \equiv h(t_k)$. In what follows, we only deal with the index k tending ultimately to infinity. Therefore our results, sometimes without further mention, are to be understood for sufficiently large k's. Obviously (3.2) is equivalent to the following

(3.4)
$$\sum_{k} \exp(-\rho h_k^2) = \infty.$$

Using (3.3) gives

(3.5)
$$\frac{(\log k)^{1/2}}{(3\rho)^{1/2}} \le h_k \le \log k.$$

Fix an $\varepsilon > 0$, then

$$(3.6) k^{-1/2}h_k^2 \le \frac{\varepsilon}{\rho},$$

(for $k \ge k_0$). Consider the measurable event $A_k = \{Y(t_k) < t_k^{1/2}/h_k\}$. From (3.1) it follows that for $k \ge k_0$,

$$(3.7) \qquad \mathbb{P}(A_k) = \mathbb{P}\left[Y(1) < \frac{1}{h_k}\right] \ge (1 - \varepsilon) \frac{2^{1-\nu}}{\Gamma(\nu+1)j_{\nu}^{1-\nu}J_{\nu+1}(j_{\nu})} \exp\left(-\rho h_k^2\right),$$

which, by means of (3.4), yields

$$(3.8) \sum_{k} \mathbb{P}(A_k) = \infty.$$

Let $k < \ell$. Since V has independent and stationary increments, we have

$$\mathbb{P}(A_k A_{\ell}) = \mathbb{P}\left[\sup_{0 \le t \le t_k} \|V(t)\| < \frac{t_k^{1/2}}{h_k}, \sup_{0 \le t \le t_{\ell}} \|V(t)\| < \frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{h_{\ell}}\right] \\
\leq \mathbb{P}(A_k) \sup_{\|x\| \le t_k^{1/2}/h_k} \mathbb{P}\left[\sup_{0 \le t \le t_{\ell} - t_k} \|V(t) + x\| < \frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{h_{\ell}}\right].$$

Using a general property of Gaussian measures (see for example Ledoux & Talagrand (1991 p.73)), it follows that

$$\mathbb{P}(A_k A_{\ell}) \leq \mathbb{P}(A_k) \mathbb{P}\left[\sup_{0 \leq t \leq t_{\ell} - t_k} \|V(t)\| < \frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{h_{\ell}}\right]
= \mathbb{P}(A_k) \mathbb{P}\left[Y(1) < \frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{(t_{\ell} - t_k)^{1/2} h_{\ell}}\right].$$

For every $n > k_0$, define

$$\mathcal{E}(n) = \{ k_0 \le k < \ell \le n : \ell - k \le (\log k)^3 \},$$

$$\mathcal{F}(n) = \{ k_0 \le k \le \ell \le n : \ell - k \ge (\log k)^3 \}.$$

It is seen that when $k < \ell < k + (\log k)^3$,

$$\begin{split} \frac{\ell}{\log \ell} - \frac{k}{\log k} &= \frac{\ell \log k - k \log \ell}{\log k \log \ell} \\ &= \frac{(\ell - k) \log k - k \log \left(1 + (\ell - k)/k\right)}{\log k \log \ell} \\ &\sim \frac{\ell - k}{\log k}, \quad (k \to \infty), \end{split}$$

which implies

$$\frac{t_k}{t_\ell} \le \exp\left(-\frac{\ell - k}{2\log k}\right).$$

Let $(k, \ell) \in \mathcal{E}(n)$. From the above estimate it follows that

$$\frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{(t_{\ell} - t_{k})^{1/2}} \le \left(1 - \exp\left(-\frac{\ell - k}{2\log k}\right)\right)^{-1/2} \le \left[K_{3} \min\left((\ell - k)/\log k, 1\right)\right]^{-1/2},$$

which, by means of (3.5), yields

$$\frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{(t_{\ell}-t_{k})^{1/2}h_{\ell}} \leq \frac{t_{\ell}^{1/2}}{(t_{\ell}-t_{k})^{1/2}h_{k}} \leq \left[K_{4}\min\left(\ell-k,\log k\right)\right]^{-1/2}.$$

From (3.9) and (3.1) it follows that

$$\mathbb{P}(A_k A_\ell) \le K_5 \mathbb{P}(A_k) \exp\left(-K_6(\ell - k)\right) + K_5 \mathbb{P}(A_k) k^{-K_6}.$$

Obviously,

$$\begin{split} \sum_{\ell > k} \exp \left(-K_6 (\ell - k) \right) & \leq K_7, \\ \sum_{k < \ell < k + (\log k)^3} k^{-K_6} & \leq k^{-K_6} (\log k)^3 \leq K_8. \end{split}$$

Therefore,

(3.10)
$$\sum_{(k,\ell)\in\mathcal{E}(n)} \mathbb{P}(A_k A_\ell) \leq K_9 \sum_{k=k_0}^n \mathbb{P}(A_k).$$

Now let $(k, \ell) \in \mathcal{F}(n)$. In this case, $\ell - (\log \ell)^2 \ge k + (\log k)^3 - (\log(k + (\log k)^3))^2 > k$, thus $\ell - k > (\log \ell)^2$. Since

$$\frac{\ell}{\log \ell} - \frac{k}{\log k} = \frac{(\ell - k) \log k - k \log (1 + (\ell - k)/k)}{\log k \log \ell} \sim \frac{\ell - k}{\log \ell},$$

we have

$$\frac{t_\ell^{1/2}}{(t_\ell - t_k)^{1/2} h_\ell} \leq \frac{1}{\left[1 - \exp\left(-(\ell - k)/2 \log \ell\right)\right]^{1/2} h_\ell} \leq \frac{1}{\left(1 - \ell^{-1/2}\right)^{1/2} h_\ell}.$$

By means of (3.9), (3.1), (3.6) and (3.7), this implies

$$\mathbb{P}(A_k A_\ell) \leq \mathbb{P}(A_k)(1+\varepsilon) \exp\left(\rho \ell^{-1/2} h_\ell^2\right) \frac{2^{1-\nu}}{\Gamma(\nu+1) j_\nu^{1-\nu} J_{\nu+1}(j_\nu)} \exp\left(-\rho h_k^2\right)$$

$$\leq (1+3\varepsilon) e^{\varepsilon} \mathbb{P}(A_k) \mathbb{P}(A_\ell).$$

Combining the above estimate together with (3.10) and (3.8) yields

$$\liminf_{n\to\infty} \sum_{k=k_0}^n \sum_{\ell=k_0}^n \mathbb{P}(A_k A_\ell) / \left(\sum_{k=k_0}^n \mathbb{P}(A_k)\right)^2 \le 1.$$

According to a well-known version of Borel-Cantelli lemma (see for example Révész (1990 p.28)), we have $\mathbb{P}(A_k, \text{i.o.}) = 1$. The proof of the divergent part of Theorem 2 is completed.

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