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 \underline{A} NOTE ON THE SOLVABILITY OF THE DIOPHANTINE EQUATION $1^n + 2^n + \dots + m^n = G(m+1)^n$

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A note on the solvability of the diophantine equation $1^{n} + 2^{n} + \dots + m^{n} = G(m+1)^{n}$

bу

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ABSTRACT

Concerning the diophantine equation

(*)
$$1^n + 2^n + \dots + m^n = G(m+1)^n$$
,

where G is a fixed positive rational, it is shown that the set of all n ϵ N for which (*) has a solution m ϵ N, has natural density zero, provided that G > $\frac{1}{e^{2\pi}-1}$. As a consequence one has that the diophantine equation

$$1^{n} + 2^{n} + \dots + m^{n} = (m+1)^{n}$$

is almost never solvable.

KEY WORDS & PHRASES: Sums of powers of integers, diophantine equation, uniform distribution.

THEOREM 1. If G \in Q and n \in IN are given then there exists at most one m \in IN such that

(1)
$$1^n + 2^n + \dots + m^n = G(m+1)^n$$

PROOF. Writing

(2)
$$\sigma_{\mathbf{m}}(\mathbf{n}) = \sum_{k=1}^{m} k^{n}, \quad (m, n \in \mathbb{N})$$

we have (cf. [3; p.5])

(3)
$$\frac{m^{n+1}(m+1)^n}{(m+1)^{n+1}-m^{n+1}} < \sigma_m(n) < \frac{m^n(m+1)^{n+1}}{(m+1)^{n+1}-m^{n+1}}.$$

Hence, defining $\Theta = \Theta(m,n)$ by

(4)
$$\sigma_{m}(n) = \frac{m^{n}(m+1)^{n}(m+0)}{(m+1)^{n+1}-m^{n+1}}$$

we have

$$(5) 0 < \Theta(m,n) < 1, \forall m,n \in \mathbb{N}.$$

It follows that if (1) is solvable we must have

(6)
$$\sigma_{m}(n) = G(m+1)^{n}$$

so that (writing Θ instead of $\Theta(m,n)$)

(7)
$$\frac{m^{n}(m+1)^{n}(m+\Theta)}{(m+1)^{n+1}-m^{n}} = G(m+1)^{n}$$

or, equivalently,

(8)
$$m^{n+1} + \Theta m^n = G(m+1)^{n+1} - Gm^{n+1}$$
.

Since $\Theta > 0$ we obtain

(9)
$$(G+1)m^{n+1} < G(m+1)^{n+1}$$

which may also be written as

(10)
$$m < -1 + \frac{1}{1-B^{1/(n+1)}}$$

where

(11)
$$B \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \frac{G}{G+1} .$$

If (1) is solvable we also have

(12)
$$\sigma_{m+1}(n) = (G+1)(m+1)^n$$

so that (writing Θ instead of $\Theta(m+1,n)$)

(13)
$$\frac{(m+1)^{n}(m+2)^{n}(m+1+\Theta)}{(m+2)^{n+1}-(m+1)^{n+1}} = (G+1)(m+1)^{n}$$

which may also be written as

(14)
$$(m+2)^{n+1} + (\Theta-1)(m+2)^n = (G+1)\{(m+2)^{n+1} - (m+1)^{n+1}\}.$$

Since Θ < 1 it follows that

(15)
$$(G+1)(m+1)^{n+1} > G(m+2)^{n+1}$$

from which it is easily seen that

(16)
$$m > -2 + \frac{1}{1-B^{1/(n+1)}}$$

where B is as in (11).

Combining (10) and (16) we obtain

(17)
$$-2 + \frac{1}{1-B^{1/(n+1)}} < m < -1 + \frac{1}{1-B^{1/(n+1)}}$$

completing the proof of theorem 1.

From the above proof it is clear that if $G \in \mathbb{Q}^+$ and $n \in \mathbb{N}$ are such that (1) is solvable for m, then this solution is given by

(18)
$$m = m(n) = [\lambda(n)]$$

where $\lambda(n)$ is defined (for all $n \in \mathbb{N}$) by

(19)
$$\lambda(n) = -1 + \frac{1}{1-B} \frac{1}{(n+1)}$$

and [x] denotes the greatest integer not exceeding x.

Now observe that

(20)
$$\lambda(n) = -1 + \frac{1}{1 - B^{1/(n+1)}} = -1 - \frac{1}{B^{1/(n+1)} - 1} = -1 - \frac{1}{\exp(\frac{1}{n+1} \log B) - 1} =$$

$$= -1 - \left\{ \frac{1}{\frac{1}{n+1} \log B} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}) \right\} = \frac{n+1}{\log \frac{1}{B}} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}), \quad (n \to \infty).$$

Since e^r is irrational for every positive rational r it follows that $\log \frac{1}{R} = \log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$ is irrational. Hence, (see [2; p.92, Satz 9]) the sequence

$$\left\{(n+1)(\log \frac{1}{B})^{-1}\right\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$$
 is uniformly distributed modulo 1 (u.d. mod 1).

Now recall that if a real sequence $\{\alpha(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is u.d. mod 1 and if $\{\beta(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is some *convergent* real sequence than also $\{\alpha(n) + \beta(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is u.d. mod 1.

From these observations it follows that $\{\lambda(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is u.d. mod 1. Since m(n), as defined by (18), is an integer and

(21)
$$0 < \lambda(n) - m(n) < 1$$

it follows that $\{\lambda(n) - m(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is uniformly distributed on the interval (0,1).

Now fix any $G \in \mathbb{Q}$ such that

(22)
$$G > \frac{1}{e^{2\pi}-1}$$

and let S be the set of all $n \in \mathbb{N}$ for which (1) is solvable with respect to m. Then we have the following

THEOREM 2. The set S has natural density zero.

PROOF. If S is finite (possibly empty) then we are done.

If S contains infinitely many elements, it follows from (18), (20) and the definition of B that

(23)
$$\lim_{\substack{n \to \infty \\ n \in S}} \frac{n}{m(n)} = \log \frac{1}{B} = \log(1 + \frac{1}{G}).$$

For every $n \in S$ we have

(24)
$$\sigma_{m}(n) = G(m+1)^{n}, (m = m(n))$$

so that, in view of (4), we have (writing θ instead of $\theta(m,n)$)

(25)
$$\frac{m^{n}(m+1)^{n}(m+\Theta)}{(m+1)^{n+1}-m^{n+1}} = G(m+1)^{n}$$

or, equivalently,

(26)
$$m = \frac{1}{(\frac{G+1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})^{1/(n+1)} - 1}.$$

Next we investigate the asymptotic behaviour of $\left\{\lambda(n)-m(n)\right\}_{n\in S}$ as $n\to\infty.$ Since for $n\in S,\ n\to\infty,$ we have

$$(27) \qquad \lambda(n) - m(n) = \frac{n+1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}) + \frac{1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}) + \frac{1}{\exp(\frac{1}{n+1}\log(\frac{G+1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})) - 1} = \frac{n+1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}) + \frac{1}{\log(\frac{G+1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})} - \frac{1}{2} + O(\frac{1}{n}) \right\} = \frac{1}{(n+1)} \left\{ \frac{1}{\log(\frac{G+1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})} - \frac{1}{\log(\frac{G+1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})} \right\} + O(\frac{1}{n}) = \frac{1}{\log(\frac{1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})} + O(\frac{1}{n}) = \frac{1}{\log(\frac{1}{G} + \frac{\Theta}{mG})} + O(\frac{1}{n}) = \frac{1}{(\log(\frac{G+1}{G})^2 + O(1))} + O(\frac{1}{n}) + O(\frac{1}{n}) = \frac{1}{(\log(\frac{G+1}{G})^2)^2} + O(1) \right\} + O(1),$$

it follows that $\{\lambda(n) - m(n)\}_{n \in S}$ is convergent as soon as $\Theta(m(n),n)$ converges for $n \to \infty$.

For the moment let us assume that $\{\Theta(m(n),n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$ is convergent. Then $\{\lambda(n)-m(n)\}_{n\in S}$ is a convergent subsequence of $\{\lambda(n)-m(n)\}_{n=1}^{\infty}$, the latter sequence being uniformly distributed on (0,1). From this it follows that S has natural density zero. Hence, in order to complete the proof of theorem 2 it suffices to prove the following

THEOREM 3. For any $n \in \mathbb{N}$ let m(n) be defined by (18). Then

(28)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \Theta(m(n),n)$$

exists and is equal to

(29) G+1 - G(G+1)
$$\log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$$

provided that $G > \frac{1}{e^{2\pi}-1}$.

<u>PROOF</u>. Similarly as in [4] we consider the asymptotic behaviour of the sums $\sigma_m(n)$ as $n \to \infty$ and $\frac{n}{m} \to \alpha = \log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$.

By means of the Euler-Maclaurin summation formula one may show that

(30)
$$\frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m^{n}} = \frac{m}{n+1} + \frac{1}{2} + \sum_{r=1}^{\left[\frac{n}{2}\right]} \frac{B_{2r}}{2r} {n \choose 2r-1} m^{-2r+1}$$

where the Bernoulli numbers B_{r} are defined by

(31)
$$\frac{z}{e^{z-1}} = \sum_{r=0}^{\infty} \frac{B_r}{r!} z^r, \quad (|z| < 2\pi).$$

It is well known that for any real $\alpha \neq 0$ (see [1; p.528])

(32)
$$\frac{1}{e^{\alpha}-1} = \frac{1}{\alpha} - \frac{1}{2} + \sum_{r=1}^{k} \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \alpha^{2r-1} + R_{k}(\alpha)$$

where

(33)
$$R_{k}(\alpha) = \frac{\alpha^{2k+1}}{e^{\alpha}-1} \int_{0}^{1} P_{2k+1}(x) e^{\alpha x} dx$$

so that

(34)
$$\frac{1}{e^{n/m}-1} - \frac{m}{n} + \frac{1}{2} = \sum_{r=1}^{k} \frac{{}^{B}2r}{(2r)!} (\frac{n}{m})^{2r-1} + R_{k}(\frac{n}{m}).$$

Taking $k = \left[\frac{n}{2}\right]$ in (34) it follows from (30) and (34) that

$$\begin{cases}
\frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} - \frac{m}{n} + \frac{1}{2} - \left\{ \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m} - \frac{m}{n+1} - \frac{1}{2} \right\} = \\
= \frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} + 1 - \frac{m}{n(n+1)} - \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m^{n}} = \\
= \sum_{r=2}^{k} \frac{\frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m} \right)^{2r-1} \left\{ 1 - \frac{n(n-1) \cdot \cdot \cdot (n-2r+2)}{n^{2r-1}} \right\} + R_{k}(\frac{n}{m}) = \\
= \sum_{r=2}^{k} \frac{\frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m} \right)^{2r-1} \delta_{n}(2r-2) + R_{k}(\frac{n}{m})
\end{cases}$$

where $\delta_n(\cdot)$ is defined by

(36)
$$\delta_{n}(a) = 1 - (1 - \frac{1}{n})(1 - \frac{2}{n})...(1 - \frac{a}{n}), \quad (a \in \mathbb{N}).$$

From the definition of $\delta_n(a)$ it is easily seen that for any fixed a ϵ ${\rm I\!N}$

(37)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} n\delta_n(a) = 1 + 2 + \dots + a = \frac{1}{2} a(a+1).$$

By mathematical induction one may show that

(38)
$$(0<) \delta_n(a) \leq \frac{a(a+1)}{2n}, (1 \leq a < n; n \geq 2).$$

As a consequence we have

(39)
$$\left| \frac{{}^{B}2r}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m} \right)^{2r-1} \delta_{n}(2r-2) \right| \leq \frac{|B_{2r}|}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m} \right)^{2r-1} \frac{(2r-2)(2r-1)}{2n}$$

so that in view of the fact that

(40)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{n}{m(n)} = \log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$$

and our assumption that

(41)
$$G > \frac{1}{e^{2\pi}-1}$$
, (so that $\log(1+\frac{1}{G}) < 2\pi$)

we have that for some $\epsilon > 0$

(42)
$$\left| \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m(n)} \right)^{2r-1} n \delta_n(2r-2) \right| \leq \frac{1}{2} \frac{|B_{2r}|}{(2r)!} (2\pi - \varepsilon)^{2r-1} (2r-2) (2r-1)$$

if n is sufficiently large (independent of r).

The right hand side of (42) is the general term of a convergent series (compare (31)) so that, by a uniform convergence argument (or by Lebesgue's dominated convergence theorem) we obtain (as before we take $k = \lceil \frac{n}{2} \rceil$)

(43)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \sum_{r=2}^{k} \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \left(\frac{n}{m}\right)^{2r-1} n\delta_{n}(2r-2) =$$

$$= \sum_{r=2}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} \left(\log(1+\frac{1}{G})\right)^{2r-1} \frac{1}{2} (2r-1)(2r-2) =$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \left(\log(1+\frac{1}{G})\right)^{2} \sum_{r=2}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} (2r-1)(2r-2)(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^{2r-3} =$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} \left(\log(1+\frac{1}{G})\right)^{2} \frac{d^{2}}{dx^{2}} \left\{\sum_{r=2}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2r}}{2r!} x^{2r-1}\right\}_{x=\log(1+\frac{1}{G})}.$$

Now observe that (see [1; p.204])

(44)
$$x \cot x = 1 - \frac{B_2}{2!} (2x)^2 + \frac{B_4}{4!} (2x)^4 - + \dots$$

from which it is easily seen that

(45)
$$\sum_{r=2}^{\infty} \frac{{}^{B}2r}{(2r)!} x^{2r-1} = \frac{i}{2} \cot \frac{xi}{2} - \frac{1}{x} - \frac{x}{12}$$

so that

(46)
$$\frac{d^2}{dx^2} \left\{ \sum_{r=2}^{\infty} \frac{B_{2r}}{(2r)!} x^{2r-1} \right\} = -\frac{2}{x^3} - \frac{e^{-x} - e^{x}}{(e^{-x/2} - e^{x/2})^4}$$

which, for $x = log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$ assumes the value

(47)
$$-\frac{2}{(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^3} + G(G+1)(2G+1).$$

Hence, defining

(48)
$$\rho(n) = n \sum_{r=2}^{k} \frac{{}^{B}2r}{(2r)!} (\frac{n}{m})^{2r-1} \delta_{n}(2r-2)$$

it follows from (35) that

(49)
$$\frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m^{n}} = \frac{1}{e^{n/m}-1} + 1 - \frac{m}{n(n+1)} - \frac{\rho(n)}{n} - R_{k}(\frac{n}{m})$$

where, in view of (43), (46) and (47)

(50)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \rho(n) = \frac{1}{2} (\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^2 \left\{ -\frac{2}{(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^3} + G(G+1)(2G+1) \right\} =$$
$$= -\frac{1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} + \frac{1}{2} G(G+1)(2G+1)(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^2.$$

For $R_k(\frac{n}{m})$ we have the following estimate

(51)
$$|R_{k}(\frac{n}{m})| \leq \frac{\left(\frac{n}{m}\right)^{2k+1}}{e^{n/m}-1} \int_{0}^{1} |P_{2k+1}(x)| e^{\frac{nx}{m}} dx \leq \frac{\left(\frac{n}{m}\right)^{2k+1}}{e^{n/m}-1} \cdot \frac{4}{(2\pi)^{2k+1}} e^{n/m} =$$

$$= \frac{4}{\pi} \frac{n/m}{e^{n/m}-1} e^{n/m} \left(\frac{n}{2\pi m}\right)^{2k} \leq C\left(\frac{n}{2\pi m}\right)^{2k}.$$

Since $\frac{n}{m} \to \log(1+\frac{1}{G})$ as $n \to \infty$ and $G > \frac{1}{e^{2\pi}-1}$ (so that $\log(1+\frac{1}{G}) < 2\pi$) it follows that $R_k(\frac{n}{m})$ tends exponentially fast to zero as $n \to \infty$.

As a simple consequence of (49), (50) and (51) we have

(52)
$$\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m^{n}} = \frac{1}{\log(1 + \frac{1}{G})} + 1 = G + 1$$

so that

(53)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m} \left\{ 1 - \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1}\right)^{n+1} \right\} = (G+1) \left\{ 1 - e^{-\log\left(1 + \frac{1}{G}\right)} \right\} = 1.$$

Now observe that

(54)
$$\Theta(m,n) = m \left\{ \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m} (1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1}) - 1 \right\} + \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m} (1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1}).$$

Hence in order to prove that $\lim_{n\to\infty}\Theta(m,n)$ exists we only need to study the asymptotic behaviour of

$$(55) \qquad m \left\{ \frac{\sigma_{m}(n)}{m^{n}} (1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1}) - 1 \right\} =$$

$$= m \left\{ (\frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} - \frac{m}{n(n+1)} + 1 - \frac{\rho(n)}{n} - R)(1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1}) - 1 \right\} =$$

$$= -m (\frac{m}{n(n+1)} + \frac{\rho(n)}{n}) \left\{ 1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1} \right\} +$$

$$+ m \left\{ (\frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} + 1)(1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1}) - 1 \right\} - m R_{k} (\frac{n}{m}) \left\{ 1 - (1 - \frac{1}{m+1})^{n+1} \right\}.$$

Since $R_k(\frac{n}{m})$ tends exponentially fast to zero and m = O(n) it follows that

(56)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} m \, R_k(\frac{n}{m}) \, \left\{1 - \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1}\right)^{n+1}\right\} = 0.$$

Next we have

(57)
$$\lim_{n\to\infty} m \left\{ \frac{m}{n(n+1)} + \frac{\rho(n)}{n} \right\} = \lim_{n\to\infty} \left\{ \frac{m^2}{n(n+1)} + \frac{m}{n} \rho(n) \right\} =$$

$$= \frac{1}{(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^2} + \frac{1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} \cdot \left\{ -\frac{1}{\log(1+\frac{1}{G})} + \frac{1}{2} G(G+1)(2G+1)(\log(1+\frac{1}{G}))^2 \right\}$$

$$= \frac{1}{2} G(G+1)(2G+1)\log(1+\frac{1}{G}).$$

Finally we have

$$\begin{aligned}
& \left\{ \left(\frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} + 1 \right) \left(1 - \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right)^{n+1} \right) - 1 \right\} = \\
& = m \left\{ \frac{e^{n/m}}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left(1 - \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right)^{n+1} \right) - 1 \right\} = m \frac{e^{n/m} - e^{n/m} \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right)^{n+1} - e^{n/m} + 1}{e^{n/m} - 1} = \\
& = m \frac{1 - e^{n/m} \left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right)^{n+1}}{e^{n/m} - 1} = \frac{m}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left\{ 1 - \exp\left(\frac{n}{m} + (n+1) \log\left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right) \right) \right\} = \\
& = -\frac{m}{e^{n/m} - 1} \frac{\exp\left(\frac{n}{m} + (n+1) \log\left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right) \right) - 1}{\left(0 \neq \right) \frac{n}{m} + (n+1) \log\left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right)} \cdot \left\{ \frac{n}{m} + (n+1) \log\left(1 - \frac{1}{m+1} \right) \right\}.
\end{aligned}$$

Observing that

(59)
$$\lim_{n \to \infty} \left\{ \frac{n}{m} + (n+1)\log(1 - \frac{1}{m+1}) \right\} = \log(1 + \frac{1}{G}) + \log e = 0$$

it follows that

$$\lim_{n \to \infty} (58) = \\
= -\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{m}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left\{ \frac{n}{m} + (n+1) \log(1 - \frac{1}{m+1}) \right\} = \\
= -\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{m}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left\{ \frac{n}{m} - (n+1) \left(\frac{1}{m+1} + \frac{1}{2(m+1)^2} + O\left(\frac{1}{3} \right) \right) \right\} = \\
= -\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{m}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left\{ \frac{n}{m} - \frac{n+1}{m+1} - \frac{n+1}{2(m+1)^2} + O\left(\frac{1}{n^2} \right) \right\} = \\
= -\lim_{n \to \infty} \frac{1}{e^{n/m} - 1} \left\{ \frac{n-m}{m+1} - \frac{m(n+1)}{2(m+1)^2} \right\} = \\
= -\frac{1}{\log(1 + \frac{1}{G})} \left\{ \log(1 + \frac{1}{G}) - 1 - \frac{1}{2} \log(1 + \frac{1}{G}) \right\} = \\
= G \left\{ 1 - \frac{1}{2} \log(1 + \frac{1}{G}) \right\}.$$

Combining (53), (54), (55), (56), (57), (58) and (60) it follows that

(61)
$$\lim_{n \to \infty} \Theta(m(n), n) = 1 + G - G(G+1) \log(1 + \frac{1}{G})$$

completing the proof of theorem 3 and hence that of theorem 2. \Box

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