

Zeitschrift: IABSE congress report = Rapport du congrès AIPC = IVBH
Kongressbericht

Band: 10 (1976)

Artikel: Foundation structures for tall buildings

Autor: Ohsaki, Yorihiko

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-10537>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Comments by the Author of the Introductory Report

Remarques de l'auteur du rapport introductif

Bemerkungen des Verfassers des Einführungsberichtes

YORIHIKO OHSAKI

Professor

University of Tokyo

Tokyo, Japan

Foundation Structures for Tall Buildings

This presentation in Working Session IV concerns the foundation structures for tall buildings. In the writer's Introductory Report (Ohsaki 1976), he has pointed out a number of problems associated with design of foundations for tall buildings.

The first problem is the heavy weight of a tall building which requires large bearing capacity of supporting soil stratum. Bearing capacities of sand stratum, gravel stratum, or heavily over-consolidated clayey stratum are usually in the range of 150 to 400 tons/sq.meter, as shown in Fig.1, allowing the

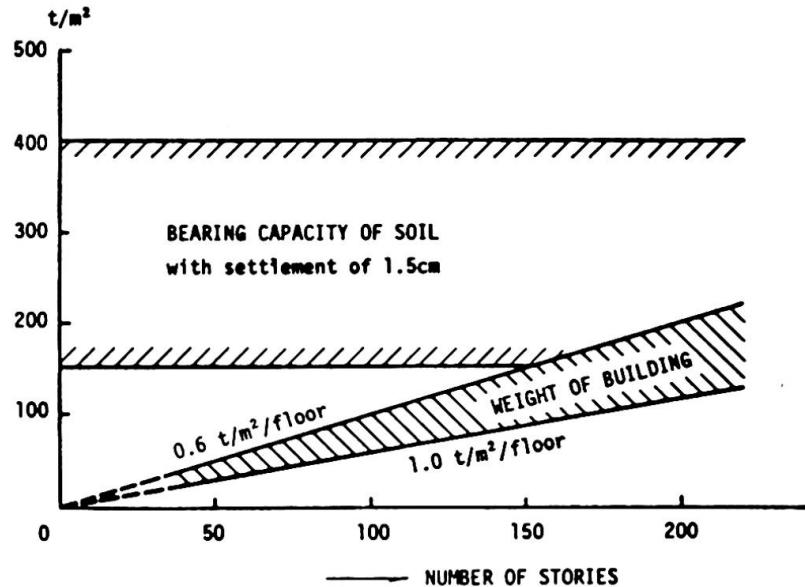


Fig.1

settlement of approximately 1.5 centimeters. On the other hand, unit weights of tall buildings of typical, steel construction are estimated to be in the range of 0.6 to 1.0 tons/sq.meter/floor. Therefore, the total weights of buildings are in the triangular range in Fig.1, which shows that there is no

serious problem in foundation design, if soil stratum of such strength can be encountered within the depth of a building basement.

If such stratum is located at a certain depth below the base of a building, a pile foundation can be used and, fortunately, no fundamental problem has been met so far in performance of pile foundation. The application of floating foundation may also be possible, which balances the weight of building and the weight of excavated soil so that no additional load would be applied to the supporting soil stratum. It is possible theoretically up to the building of approximately 40 stories; however, it seems that there has been no experience of applying the idea of floating foundation actually to high-rise buildings.

The second problem is the effects of wind force. As shown in Fig.2, when a building is subjected to wind force, the overturning moment causes an increase

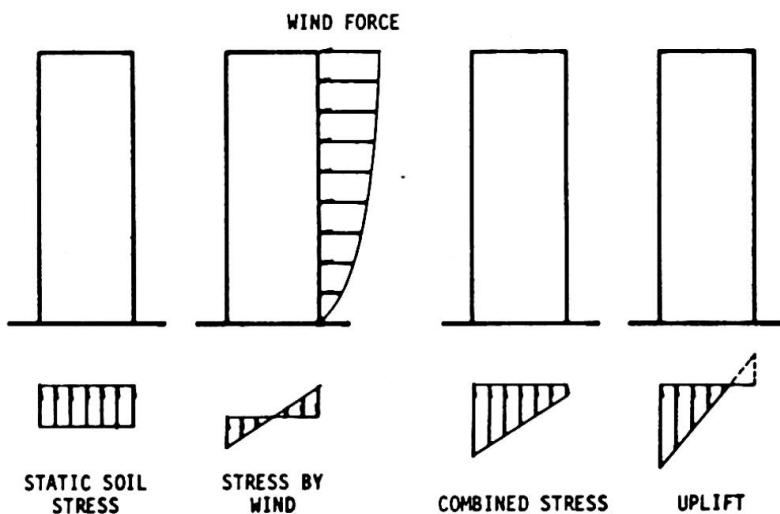


Fig.2

of soil reaction stress on one side and a decrease on the other side. Usually, as the combined stress is within twice the static stress, if Fig.1 is again considered, there would be no danger of failure of supporting soil. If overturning moment increases still more, uplift takes place as also shown in Fig.2, which indicates a tendency to make the structure unstable. However, the uplift can readily be prevented by providing setback as shown in Fig.3 and, when the setback can not be provided, anchoring shown in Fig.3 may be an effective way, but it has not been actually utilized for tall buildings up to the present time.

In a foundation slab, the outer part shaded in Fig.4 is most effective to resist the overturning moment, while the middle part is not so effective mechanically. Moreover, if permanent settlements are produced beneath the edge of a foundation slab under repeated wind loadings, the presence of the middle part is rather harmful causing the so-called riding effect, which will accelerate the rocking motion of the superstructure. In consideration of these and other facts, Schlaich and Otto suggest an idea of ring foundation for a tower structure, and describe in detail many examples of their design experiences of actual tower structures in their Preliminary Report (Schlaich & Otto 1976).

The last problem is the effects of seismic forces. In Japan of extremely high seismicity, seismic forces are usually larger than wind forces for typical buildings of less than approximately 50 stories. However, as a general shape of acceleration response spectrum in Fig.5 indicates, the earthquake input to tall and flexible buildings is rather small when compared with low and stiff

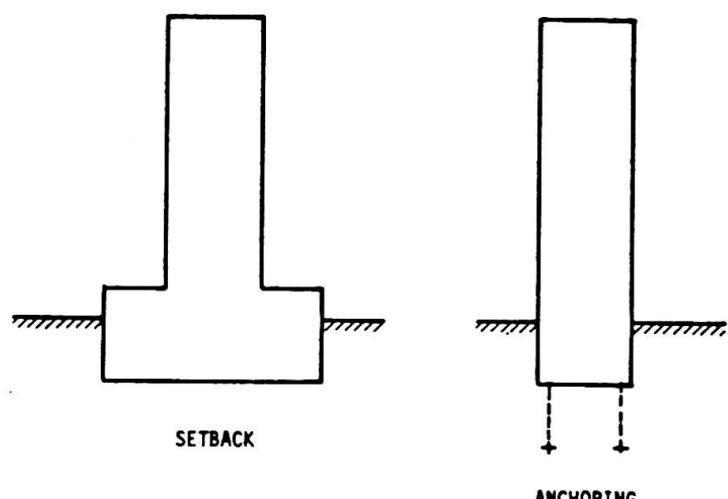


Fig.3

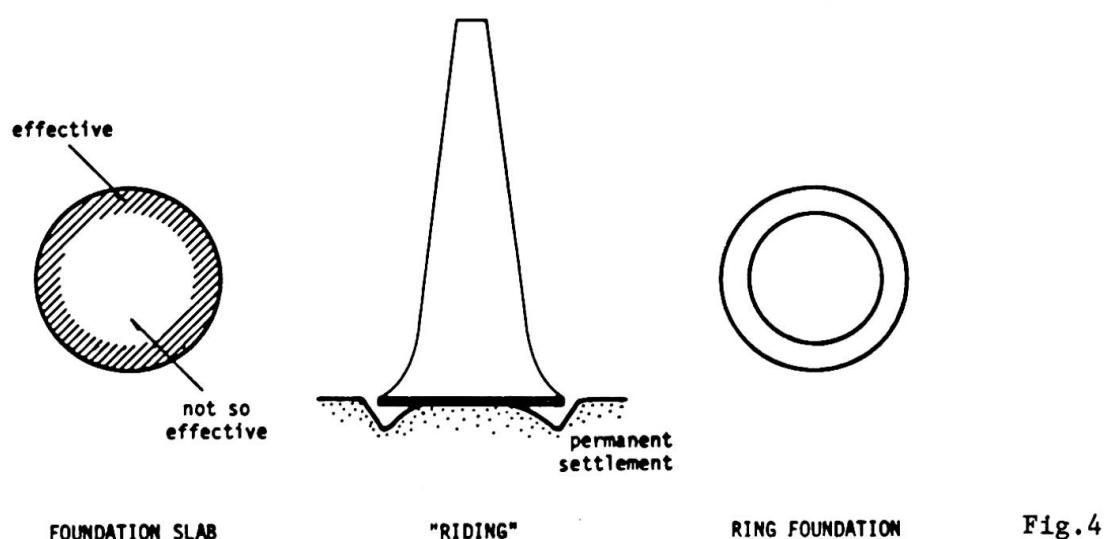


Fig.4

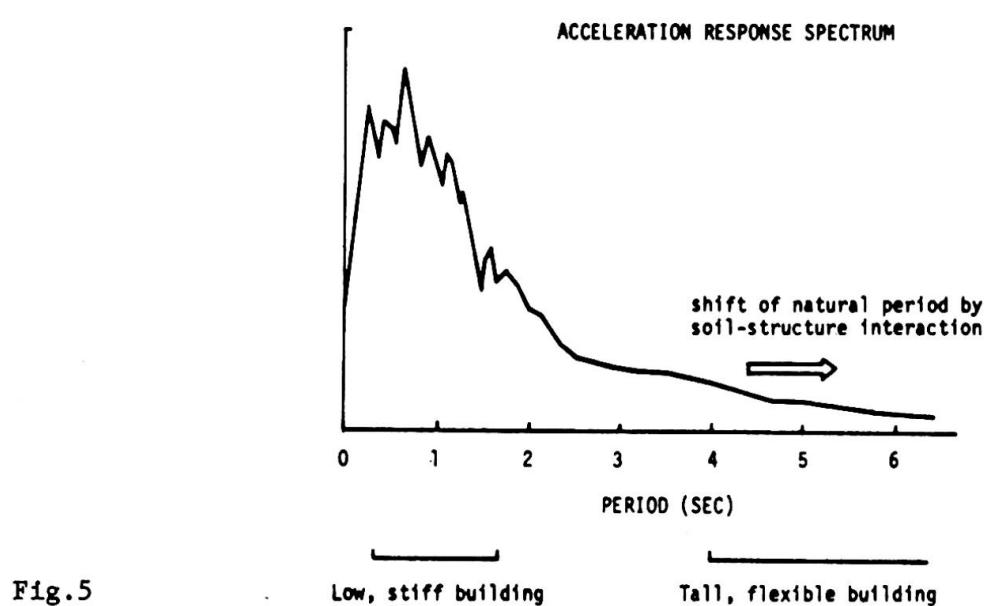


Fig.5

buildings. Moreover, the effect of soil-structure interaction tends to still reduce the input force, although the interaction effect is not important in general for flexible buildings.

In conclusion, there may be several problems in foundation design specific to tall buildings, they will not be of great difficulty to overcome unless soil conditions are extraordinarily unfavorable.

REFERENCES

Ohsaki, Y. (1976) : Foundation Structures for Tall Buildings, Introductory Report, 10th Congress, Tokyo, International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering, pp.175-186

Schlaich, J. & U. Otto (1976) : Zur Gründung hoher Stahlbetontürme, Preliminary Report, 10th Congress, Tokyo, International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering, pp.349-355