

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

**Band:** 13 (1988)

**Artikel:** Stability of a stone arch bridge against flood pressure and its  
preservation

**Autor:** Konishi, Yasunori / Maeda, Yukio / Murota, Akira

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-13042>

### **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:** 03.01.2026

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

## Stability of a Stone Arch Bridge against Flood Pressure and its Preservation

Stabilité de ponts arcs en pierre sous la pression des flots lors d'inondations et leur préservation

Stabilität von Steinernen Bogenbrücken bei Hochwasser und deren Instandhaltung

### Yasunori KONISHI

Prof. Dr.-Eng.  
Nagasaki Univ.  
Nagasaki, Japan



Yasunori Konishi, born in 1926, received his B.E. and Dr.-Eng. from Osaka University. Since 1977 he has been Professor of Structural Engineering, Nagasaki University.

### Yukio MAEDA

Prof. Dr.-Eng.  
Kinki Univ.  
Higashi-Osaka, Japan



Yukio Maeda received his B.E. at Hokkaido Univ. and Dr.-Eng. at Univ. of Tokyo. In 1985 he retired from Osaka Univ., awarded Professor Emeritus of Osaka Univ. Since 1985 he is Prof. of Structural Eng. at Kinki Univ. At Present he is serving IABSE as Chairman of Technical Committee.

### Akira MUROTA

Prof. Dr.-Eng.  
Osaka Univ.  
Suita, Osaka, Japan



Akira Murota, born in 1927, received his B.E. and Dr.-Eng. from Osaka University. Since 1964 he has been Professor of hydraulics, Osaka University.

## SUMMARY

Dynamic water pressure caused by the rapid flood water which hit Nagasaki, Japan, in 1982, took away the spandrels and railings of the Momotani, Megane and Fukuro Bridges of stone arch, but their arch stones remained. Six other bridges of a similar type were completely destroyed. To measure the hydrodynamic pressure which caused great damage to the stone arch bridges, two stone arch models of the Fukuro Bridge were tested in a testing channel. Based on the test results, the stability of a stone arch bridge against flood pressure and its preservation are discussed in this paper.

## RÉSUMÉ

La pression hydrodynamique, engendrée par le débit de flots rapides, qui frappa Nagasaki au Japon, en 1982, emporta les voûtes et les garde-corps de plusieurs ponts arcs massifs mais leurs pierres d'arche demeurèrent intactes. Six autres ponts du même type furent complètement détruits. Pour mesurer la pression hydrodynamique ayant endommagé les ponts arcs en pierres, deux modèles réduits d'arcs en pierre du pont de Fukuro ont été testés dans un canal d'essai. Sur la base des résultats des tests, la résistance des ponts en arcs pierre contre la pression des flots et sa préservation sont discutés dans ce document.

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die dynamischen Drücke schnell-strömender Hochwasserfluten, von denen Nagasaki, Japan 1982, betroffen wurde, rissen die Bogenfüllungen und die Fahrbahn der Momotani-, Megane- und Fukuro-Brücken weg, liessen aber Steinbögen stehen. Sechs weitere Brücken ähnlichen Typs wurden völlig zerstört. Um die für die Zerstörung der steinernen Bogenbrücken verantwortlichen dynamischen Wasserdrücke zu messen, wurden zwei Modell-Steinbögen der Fukuro Brücke in einem Testkanal getestet. Basierend auf diesen Testergebnissen wird in diesem Beitrag die Stabilität einer Steinbogenbrücke gegen Hochwasserdruck und ihre Instandhaltung diskutiert.



## 1. OUTLINE

The present paper is related with exceptional conditions due to extreme flood flow, and discusses experimentally the stability of a stone arch bridge against flood pressure and its preservation. A heavy local downpour hit the Nagasaki area of Kyushu Island in Japan on July 23, 1982, causing a sudden increase of water flow in many rivers, so that the flow reached the superstructures of bridges crossing the Uragami, Nakajima, Hachiro and other rivers.<sup>1)</sup>

In Kyushu, including Nagasaki, Kumamoto and Kagosima prefectures, there still remain many rivers spanned by stone arch bridges. The stone arch bridges were constructed by a traditional method which was one of the most reliable methods of bridge construction, as well proven by many ancient Roman Bridges still stoutly remaining after some two thousand years.

While such stone bridges are a valuable property in the history of building techniques, they were appointed important cultural assets in Japan. In addition, along the River Nakajima, Nagasaki, there are many other stone bridges like Momotani, Oide, Amigasa, Furumachi, Ichiran, Susukihara, Higashi-shin and Fukuro bridges, which were rated as the important cultural properties by the City and have formed the sights of the city.

This Nakajima River, running through the center of Nagasaki City, was struck by the aforementioned local downpour and the flooding occurred which submerged the road surfaces of these stone bridges. Dynamic water pressure generated by the fast flood flow (3.5 m/sec to 4.0 m/sec) took away the arch spandrels and upper railings of the Momotani, Megane and Fukuro bridges, but left the arch stones. Six other bridges were completely destroyed and only some of the bridge foundations were left.

Since these bridges provide the City's road network with arteries, they have been playing an important role in the city transportation, especially as escape ways for emergency or as access for the reconstruction works after a disaster.

The combined forces and moments working on the arch stones, caused by drag, lift, yawing moment, pitching moment and rolling moment were measured through an experimentation of the model stone arch bridge. As a result of calculation of the resistance of the stone arch bridge against flood flow, we confirmed that as far as the Fukuro bridge is concerned the arch stones were stable.

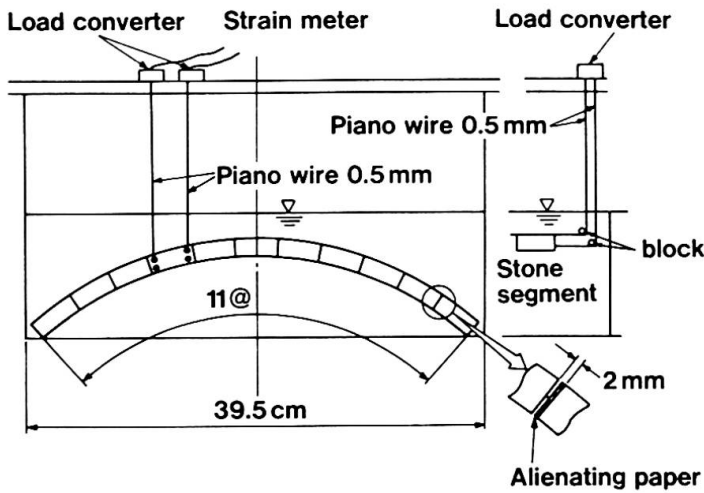
Collapse tests of the flood flow pressure on a stone arch bridge model of the same construction as the actual bridge were also carried out.<sup>2)</sup>

## 2. EXPERIMENT ON STONE ARCH BRIDGE MODEL

### 2.1 Model Dimensions and Experimental Facilities

The experiment was carried out by putting a 1/38.5 scale model of the existing Fukuro bridge into the test water channel with the width of 40 cm and the slop of 1/94.14 to reproduce the flood condition. Fig.1 shows a beam instrument used for measuring the loads and Fig.2 shows the construction of the model stone arch.

Load magnitudes on each arch stone ②, ③ . . . . ⑫ were measured by detecting strains with a strain meter on load converters tied by piano wires of 0.5mm to the lift measurement points ①, ②, ③ and ④ and the drag measurement points ⑤, ⑥, ⑦, and ⑧. An alienating paper is inserted in 2mm gap between arch stones illustrated in Fig.1 in order to plug water flow to avoid hydraulic stress and to lower frictional coefficient between stones. The magnitudes and application points of resultant flow forces working on each

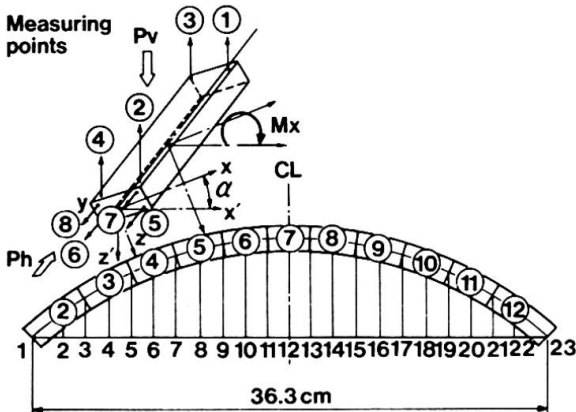


**Fig. 1 Illustration of model experimental facilities**

arch stone were thus measured, and such external forces determining the limiting hydrodynamic fracture stress on the stone arch bridge as flow pressure, drag, lift (static water pressure + lift), horizontal pressure, yawing moment, rolling moment and pitching moment were computed from the measured values.

Table 1. shows the average values  $F_m$  of the resultant forces measured about fifty times at the measuring points ①~⑧ for the eleven arch stones

② to ⑫. In Table 2, the drag  $Ph(g)$ , the lift + static water pressure  $Pv(g)$ , the pitching moment  $Mx(g-cm)$ , the drag coefficient  $C_d$ , the lift coefficient  $C_l$  and the static water pressure  $Ps(g)$ , and the average flow velocity at 90cm of the upper stream  $U(cm/sec)$ , are given as the values calculated by the three kinds of stresses and the three kinds of moments mentioned above. Although the actual measurement values in Table 1 and Table 2 were in fact not necessarily symmetrical, these were averaged for the convenience of the calculation.



**Fig. 2 Fukuro bridge model**

**Table 1. Values of  $F_m$**

Measuring point Stone number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2	7.38	43.7	2.4	7.0	4.98	6.06	3.97	6.17
3	9.03	33.4	3.0	15.8	8.50	3.22	6.02	7.76
4	16.27	24.7	7.5	16.2	5.53	4.12	7.17	7.05
5	15.21	16.3	11.5	13.0	5.80	3.85	7.57	5.34
6	8.29	9.4	5.3	12.1	3.71	3.84	6.12	6.69
7	7.21	15.7	6.4	12.9	4.15	4.50	2.44	4.35
7A	4.58	13.3	6.0	13.8	1.16	1.29	1.49	2.79
8	4.89	18.2	9.3	16.2	3.54	3.11	4.32	4.35
9	9.84	11.5	14.3	17.0	5.44	8.60	4.62	6.62
10	6.50	17.4	21.0	22.5	4.22	8.16	4.86	8.10
11	0.80	9.1	13.7	37.2	2.42	4.10	11.54	8.64
12	4.59	9.1	8.9	40.2	6.32	4.58	6.00	5.33

### 3. STABILITY OF STONE ARCH BRIDGES AGAINST FLOOD FLOW

#### 3.1 Experimental Results and Structural Analysis

A three-dimensional construction illustrated in Fig.2 was analyzed by F.E.M. using the measurement values of the drag  $Ph(g)$ , the lift + static water

Table 2.  $P_h, P_v$  and other parameters (symmetrically rearranged)

Stone number	$P_h$ (g)	$P_v$ (g)	$M_x$ (g-cm)	$C_d$	$C_l$	Static water pressure (g)	$U$ (cm/s)
2	21.7	61.6	180.6	1.14	2.01	214.2	85.8
3	26.1	61.0	160.4	1.21	1.15	166.9	90.9
4	24.6	66.0	69.2	1.12	0.59	124.4	87.7
5	23.9	54.4	16.4	0.73	0.23	88.6	106.5
6	17.8	41.9	62.8	0.51	0.16	66.4	111.1
7	11.0	40.0	76.6	0.25	0.13	61.0	111.7

pressure  $P_v(g)$  and the pitching moment  $M_x$  (g-cm).

Elastic coefficients of the arch stones used for the model arch bridge were measured as follows:

$$E=5.76 \times 10^4 \text{ kg/cm}^2, \text{ Poisson's ratio } \nu = 0.18, G=2.43 \times 10^4 \text{ kg/cm}^2.$$

The weight of each stone segment was  $2.23 \text{ g/cm}^3$  and the underwater coefficient of friction between the arch stones was 0.67. Through the structural analysis it was observed that the axial force  $F_x(g)$ , the shearing stress  $F_z(g)$  and the flexural moment  $M_y(g\text{-cm})$  due to the in-plane arch action, and the shearing stress  $F_y(g)$ , the torque  $T(g\text{-cm})$  and the flexural moment  $M_z(g\text{-cm})$  due to the out-of-plane arch action, occurred as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. Three-dimensional stresses and moments on arch bridge

Number of panel point	Axial load $F_x$ (g)	Shearing stress (out-of-plane) $F_y$ (g)	Shearing stress (in-plane) $F_z$ (g)	Torque $T$ (g-cm)	Flexure in-plane $M_y$ (g-cm)	Flexure out-of-plane $M_z$ (g-cm)
1	-897.3	119.7	4.2	-163.7	-102.7	-218.2
3	-832.8	98.0	40.5	-25.4	-130.3	115.1
5	-778.1	71.9	50.3	74.0	-54.1	366.7
7	-735.2	47.3	37.6	73.2	23.1	564.4
9	-710.2	23.4	27.4	7.9	61.2	686.4
11	-699.3	5.5	23.5	-16.4	76.7	728.4
13	-699.4	-5.5	18.3	-27.0	76.7	728.4

### 3.2 Calculation of Stability of Stone Arch Bridges against Hydrodynamic Pressures

Bridge stability against shearing stress  $\tau_1$  generated by torque  $\tau_2$  due to the in-plane arch action and the shearing stress  $\tau_3$  due to the out-of-plane arch action, can be maintained by frictional stress due to the arch thrust.

The allowable shearing stress due to the friction is denoted by  $\tau_a$ .

When the resultant stress of  $\tau_1$ ,  $\tau_2$ , and  $\tau_3$  becomes larger than  $\tau_a$  the stability of sealing material between arch stones is lost so that they may start rotating or slipping, and finally the bridge will collapse. Fig.3 shows the calculated results, proving that the stability was maintained in the model arch.

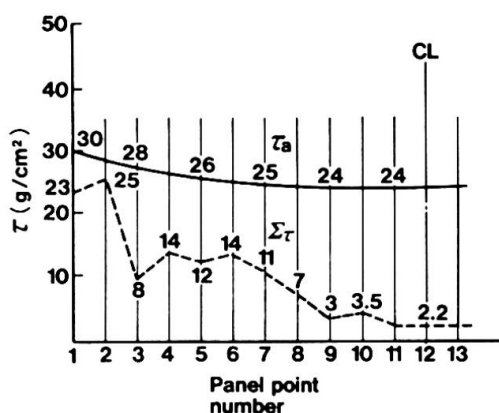


Fig. 3 Results of stability calculation with experimental values

#### 4. COLLAPSE TEST OF MODEL STONE ARCH BRIDGE

For the collapse test under flood flow a model stone arch bridge using the same number of stones as the existing bridge and scaled down to 1/38.5, was installed in the experimental water channel with the 1/94.14 flow slope. The process of collapse was filmed on a video camera.

The road surface and spandrel of the arch bridge were washed away soon after the bridge was submerged, but the arch stones did not collapse. However, after being flooded for a long time, the seal started gradually to slip out and the arch stones to move. Finally, the sealant gap became larger and then the bridge collapsed. The details are shown in Photos 1-3.

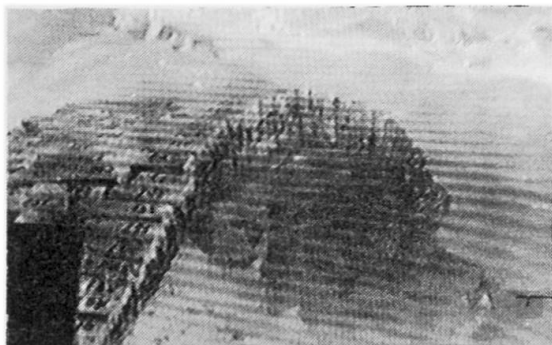


Photo 1 Collase of arch stones

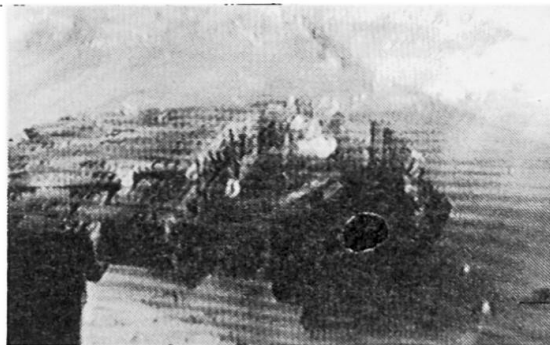


Photo 2 Collase of arch stones

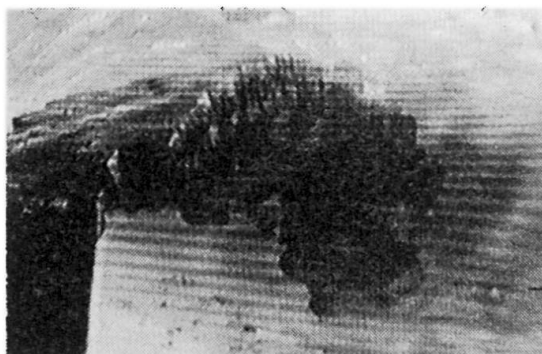


Photo 3 Collase of arch stones

Then, providing with an adhesive between arch stone segments, and making a continuous structure the arch stones may not collapse, and these stone arch bridge as the cultural properties will be able to be preserved against flood pressure.

The Fukuro bridge, only using an epoxy adhesive at the joint of the stones of arch spandrel and of pavemant of the road surface, could maintain the stability of the stone arch bridge against flood pressure. Photos. 4 and 5 show the appearance of Fukuro bridge.

#### 5. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were obtained.



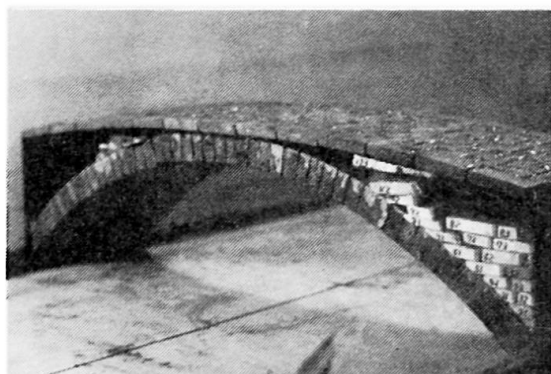


Photo 4 Collapse of arch spandrel of downstream side.

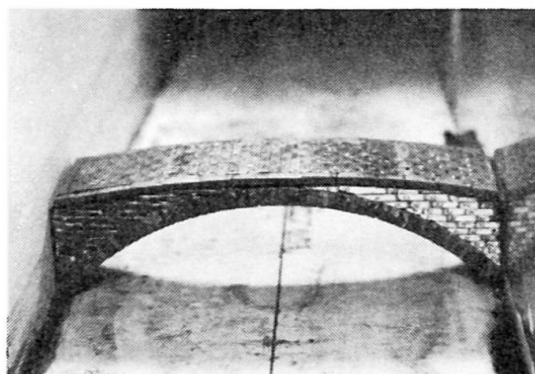


Photo 5 Non collapse of arch spandrel

(1) The experimental flow volume was calculated to be  $216 \text{ m}^3/\text{sec}$  for the actual bridge and this corresponds to 68 % of the flow of  $320 \text{ m}^3/\text{sec}$  estimated for the flood.

(2) In the test, to measure the resultant hydrodynamic forces acting on the arch stones by putting a model stone arch bridge in a reproduced flood flow, a substantial amount of standard deviation was recorded due to the jet stream and due to the existence of cavitation down-stream from the arch stones.

(3) Due to the hydrodynamic forces mentioned above, when the shearing stress caused by torque due to the out-of-plane arch action, the shearing stress due to the in-plane arch action and the shearing stress due to the out-of-plane arch action, exceed the frictional resistance produced by the axial torque of the arch sealing, the sealing between the arch stones will lose the stability, so that they start rotating or slipping and finally the collapse will take place. In the experiment, however, such a collapse did not occur and the arch stones stayed safe.

(4) The arch spandrel of the model stone arch bridge using the same number of stones as the actual bridge was immediately carried away in the collapse test, though the arch stones were not destroyed. However, when left in the flow for a long time, the sealant slipped away, the stone segments also dropped off and the bridge collapsed.

(5) By providing with an adhesive at the joint of the arch stone segments, stone arch bridges will be preserved against flood flow.

#### REFERENCES

1) Konishi, Y. : "A Report on Flood Disaster in July 1982--- Damage to Bridges", A Study Report on National Disasters subsidized by the Scientific Research Fund of the ministry of Education, Japan, pp.109- 116. 1983.

2) Konishi, Y. : "Experimental Study on Effect of Stone Arch Bridge on Flood Flow and its Stability against Flood Pressure," Japan Society of Civil Engineers, Structural Eng./Earthquake Eng. Vol.4. No.1, pp61s-71s.1987.