

# International conference on cable-stayed bridges: Bangkok, November 18-20, 1987

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## 2. International Conference on Cable-Stayed Bridges Bangkok, November 18 – 20, 1987

About 490 specialists met in Bangkok in November 1987 to exchange knowledge on the design, construction and maintenance of cable-stayed bridges. The best experts from 36 countries attended the conference, which coincided with the grand opening of the world's longest single-plane cable-stayed bridge (Chao Phya River Crossing in Bangkok, main span 450 metres).

The 3-day Conference, organized by Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand, featured 140 contributed papers and 10 guest lectures presented by world famous bridge authorities, including M. Ito (Japan), T.A. Wyatt (UK), N.J. Gimsing (Denmark), P.R. Taylor (Canada), E.H. Phillips (UK), Y. Masuda (Japan), R.A. Freeman (UK), M. Virlogeux (France), J. Tajima (Japan), A. Davenport (Canada). These papers were included in the resourceful Proceedings edited by W. Kanok-Nukulchai.

Contributed papers were presented on the following subject areas:

1. General Prospects of Cable-Stayed Bridges
2. Stability and Secondary Effects
3. Experimentation and Monitoring

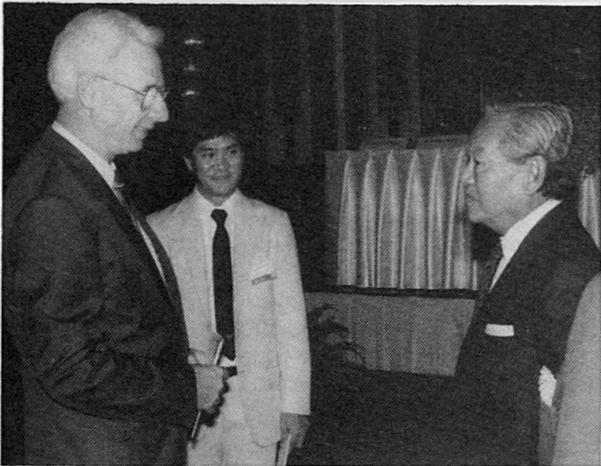
4. Analysis and Behaviors
5. Computational Methods
6. Dynamics and Seismic Effects
7. Aerodynamics and Wind Effects
8. Design and Optimization
9. Bridge Decks, Cables and Anchorages
10. Construction and Management
11. Maintenance and Services
12. Case Studies: World's Cable-Stayed Bridges
13. On Bangkok's Rama IX Cable-Stayed Bridge.

For members of IABSE, the Conference Secretariat has made a special offer for purchase of the Conference Proceedings – «Cable-Stayed Bridges: Experiences & Practice» (1545 pages, 1000 illustrations and the most up-to-date bibliography of 850 references) at special discount price of US \$ 60 per set of 2 volumes (regular price US \$ 80) plus US \$ 25 (air-mail) or US \$ 5 (surface mail) shipping cost. Order can be made to

W. Kanok-Nukulchai  
CABRIDGE Secretariat  
AIT, GPO Box 2754  
Bangkok 10501, Thailand.



*The newly completed Rama IX Cable-Stayed Bridge over Chao Phraya River in Bangkok, having a span length of 450 meters, the longest among all single-plane cable-stayed bridges.*



*Prof. Jörg Schlaich (left) was introduced to H. E. Charitchai Chunhavan (right), Deputy Prime Minister, by the CABRIDGE Conference Secretariat, Dr. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai (center).*

Professor J. Schlaich, Stuttgart, Federal Republic of Germany, Chairman of IABSE Working Commission on «Concrete Structures» and Keynote Lecturer at the Conference in Bangkok, gave a Welcoming Address on behalf of IABSE's President, Professor von Gunten from Zurich and IABSE's Technical Committee Chairman, Professor Yukio Maeda from Osaka:

We from IABSE (and I think all the engineers present here) feel that it was a splendid idea of the initiators and organizers of this conference to combine its scientific contents with its true purpose, the opening of a bridge, thus demonstrating what we are here, not for self-satisfaction in an esoteric ivory castle, but to serve people with our skill and knowledge, by bringing people together who are separated by rivers, by bridging gaps, by providing infrastructure, which is the prerequisite for all economic development and a decent standard of living.

This combination of conference and application makes us aware, and we should gratefully acknowledge it, that we civil engineers are lucky to have one of the most rewarding of all technical professions, in so far as we are amongst the last generalists. Instead of being forced to specialize too much, we are still able to have more than just an idea of the complete field, which then enables us to see and understand it in its entirety.

This, however, together with the fact that our products – bridges, buildings, towers, dams – last longer than so many others, such as cars, computers or furniture, and that therefore every one of our products represents a certain percentage of the only absolutely non-renewable resource of our earth, that is, the surface of our earth itself – this should make us permanently aware of our huge responsibility.

Let us not forget that the project as a whole is more than merely the bridge between its two abutments, that its purpose is to serve people and only if its entire context is suited to the physical and human environment is this purpose fulfilled. A bridge can be perfectly

designed and constructed but nevertheless a disaster if it connects two sides which do not fit together, for example if it brings heavy and noisy traffic into a residential area, if it causes a natural resort or the formerly quiet and modest homes of hundreds of thousands suddenly to be sacrificed to speculation, if its wide and curved approaches or even its land-consuming toll stations make thousands of families homeless, losing their neighbours and their roots, if, due to a thoughtless or only cost-oriented design it spoils the beauty of a landscape, if it is built mainly for military purposes, if it is not really needed, but only serves to satisfy the ambition of some political group and maybe even destroys jobs by depriving ferry-men of their traditional employment, if, if, if... I could go on and on and I could even illustrate each of these ifs with numerous examples.

Therefore, bridge building should also mean to ask whether a bridge is really necessary, whether it should be here or elsewhere, what it should look like, whether, as a whole, it serves mankind.

Let me make clear that I am by no means hostile towards technology, let alone bridges; on the contrary, I love bridges. I know of so many cases where they not only fully serve their purpose, but also enrich landscapes with their beauty, and I would even claim that we have every right to build bridges not only because they are needed, but also, if we can afford it, for the sheer pleasure we get from building, as an expression of the joy of living, as a contribution to building culture, as art.

But again, to make this really happen, we must see the overall context, which means that we as engineers must get involved in the decision-making process itself, in the process by which the decision is taken as to whether a bridge is needed and where and how. We should not leave these decisions, this most important step in the life of a bridge, solely to those who are not there anymore when the bridge is finished, because their term in office is over, and who know nothing about the actual task of bridge-building. A world that is becoming more and more dependent on technology cannot afford the present situation, that is that parliaments are almost totally dominated by non-scientists and non-technicians, by professional politicians, by lawyers, teachers and civil servants.

If we truly saw bridges in their entirety, we would not only be justified in referring to ourselves, with some pride, as bridgebuilders; we would also have every right to use the antique Latin title «pontifex», bridgemaker, a title which seems to be so attractive that Catholic Popes have been calling themselves «Pontifex» for some fifteen hundred years. You see, it would be worth the effort.

With that in mind, I wish this conference every success; I thank the organizers for their efforts, and I welcome you, my dear pontifices, in the name of IABSE, our worldwide engineers' association, which promotes the high goals that I have tried to describe.

*Jörg Schlaich  
Chairman of IABSE Working Commission  
«Concrete Structures»*