

Summary of the 6th International Conference on Earthquake Geotechnical Engineering - 6ICEGE

Stephanie Lange

Christchurch, New Zealand, November 1 - 4, 2015

Participants from OSU:

Dean Scott Ashford, Prof. Michael Olsen, Prof. Armin Stuedlein,

Prof. Ben Mason, Prof. Daniel Gillins

Graduate Students Kengo Kato and Stephanie Lange

What can I say about this outstanding conference?

The name alone speaks thousand words - Geotechnical Earthquake Engineering, and everybody who is internationally involved in this subject was there, attending the conference, participating in presentations, posters, and the exhibition. The program was so dense, the committee had to organize the conference in four parallel sessions each morning and afternoon over four days. And each session had their invited guest speaker of international importance. It was just an abundance in cutting edge knowledge presented.

But how can I summarize this vast amount of happenings?

Let me start with the conference city: Christchurch, New Zealand, where severe liquefaction took place during the Canterbury Earthquake Sequence in 2010/2011. The earthquake magnitudes reached up to Mw 7.1. The aftershocks were as devastating as the main events with magnitudes ranging from Mw 5.3 to 6.3. The city's central district simply collapsed and is under construction until today. This was the perfect venue for a conference of this order. The general public is informed after all what happened and even my taxi-airport driver naturally knew what lateral spreading is and asked me if I have had seen some of the affected places here in Christchurch, which I did by the way. The taxi drivers comment gave me a smile and reminded me of the speech the major of Christchurch gave at the beginning of the conference. She said that the work of a geotechnical earthquake engineer is very much important and supports all there is in a city! Thank you, major, for saying it out loud! This made us all feel acknowledged and supported in our work.

Back to the conference: I was particularly interested in this conference and the city where it took place because my own research interest in liquefaction. Other conference subjects, besides soil liquefaction, lateral spreading and their mitigation, were about specific case histories including Nepal, numerical modeling, soil-structure-foundation interaction, site effects, retaining structures and deep foundations, and many more. If anyone is interested in some subjects, please contact me and I can send the table of content and later the article(s) of interest (email: langest at oregon-state.edu).

I also enjoyed very much the possibility to meet new people, well known professors, like Misko Cubrinovski, who was the chairman of this conference and is a professor at the Canterbury University in Christchurch and one of the leading researchers in the field of liquefaction. I met other participants from the industry like Paul Somerville, one of the leading seismologist for subsurface ground-motions and shear-wave velocities, and I met other graduate students from well established universities around the world, e.g Christchurch, Vancouver BC, Perdue University, UC Berkeley, and others. Also, I was eager to learn about the Nepal Earthquake and took advantage of the complete Napal session.

After the conference, the organizer offered Technical Tours. I attended a Technical Tour with the subject of slope instability and remediation on the Port Hills in Christchurch, which were hit hard by rock fall. The tour showed clearly that the temporary security measures - mainly shipping containers along roads and rock faces - were successful. Even the central district of Christchurch uses modified shipping containers for its shopping mall, which is a tourist attraction nowadays.

Four years after the last earthquake event, the city is still building itself up. The conference center downtown is not finished yet, so the conference took place at the Airforce museum - that is why there is an airplane in the background of our OSU group picture.



Figure 1: OSU Group Photo at the 6th International Conference on Earthquake Geotechnical Engineering in Christchurch, New Zealand

In short, I can say that the conference was a total success in terms of learning new things and in terms of social networking.

After the conference was over, most participants took some days off to see some of New Zealand's beauty. I did my New Zealand travel before the conference. And here are some of my impressions. New Zealand is a nature's paradise with small windy roads, gentil green hills, harsh mountainous regions, and calm fjordlands. And anybody how loves nature, birds, and vulcanic activities, has to have New Zealand on his or her must-see list.

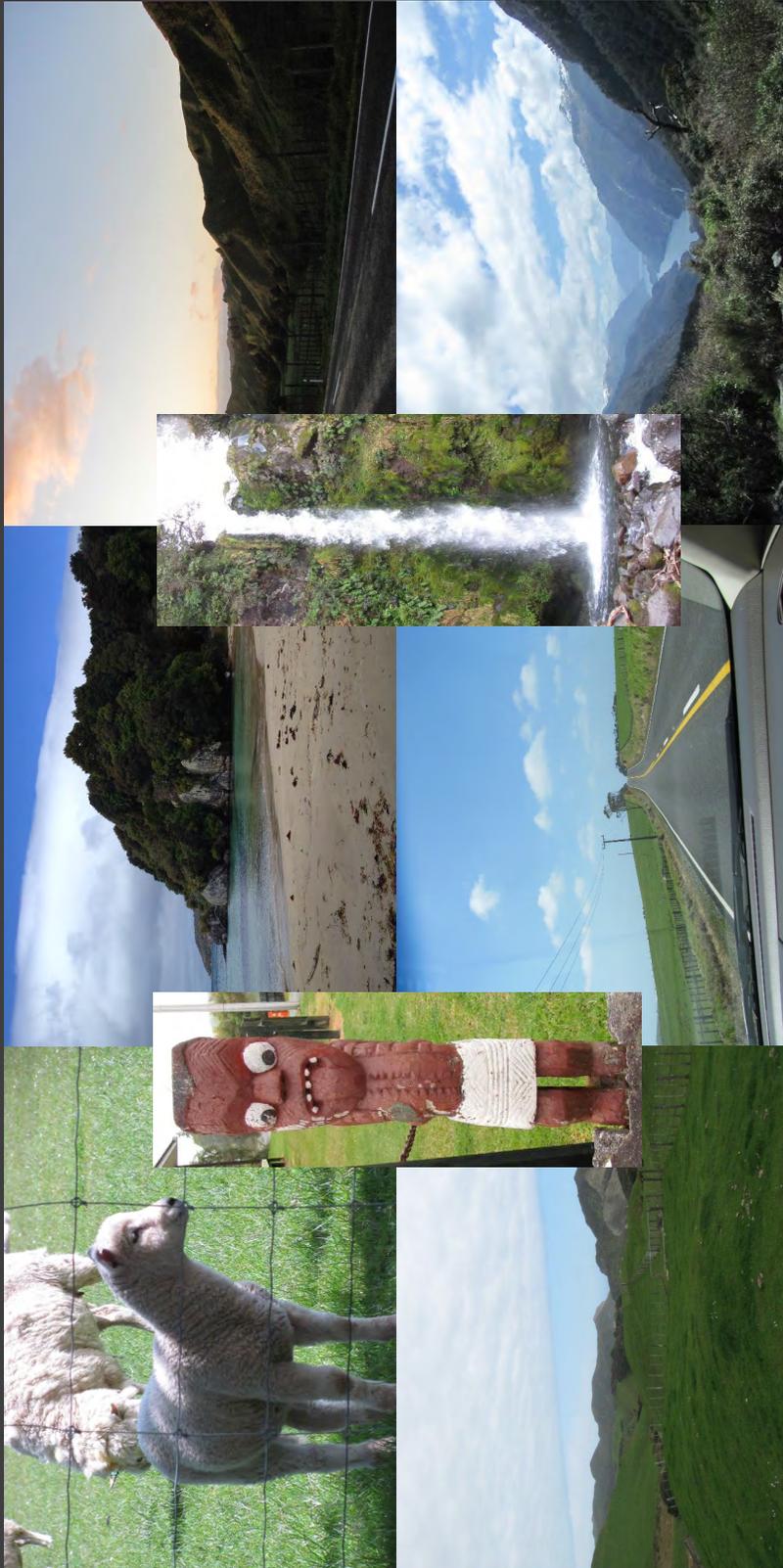


Figure 2: Personal Impressions of New Zealand