

Reflection on the trip to Guangxi (5th – 8th March 2016)

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This is the first time I have been Guangxi, China, and it is definitely a new experience for me. Having been to other parts of China several times, I am overwhelmed by the greatly diverse culture across the country. I have been to places like Beijing and Xi'an, but the people and food there was nothing like that of Guangxi. On this trip, I tasted many dishes that I have never tasted before. Although it was not to my taste, I appreciate the effort that the locals have put into making them for us. It was actually fun to try all the specialties since their style of cuisine is very different from Guangdong and Hong Kong. Eating is like an adventure because you won't know how it taste until you've tried it. One of the foods I liked best was the spicy Guilin noodles. The hot sauce was delicious.

I was also surprised by the hospitality of the local people. They seemed genuinely happy to see us there. At the principal's house, for instance, they welcomed us with a lot of food and liquor. Every meal is accompanied by alcohol, which is a big shock. They show their friendship by drinking until they are drunk. Their liquor was very strong, but also delicious. I have heard about the alcohol culture in mainland before, but it was still very shocking to experience it first-hand.

Apart from the local cultural experience, I learned a lot about the preparation work of a construction project by observing in the meetings with the different parties. I realized that communication is very important between engineers and architects. We should not hesitate to ask about any problems or suggest changes in the design. It is better to get a clear consensus than to guess at the architects' intentions. I learned a lot from the questions asked by the Guangxi University students and other members of our team. For example, we asked about the orientation of the balcony door. I discovered that many of the concerns were focused on how to make the building a better place to live for the occupants. We have to consider the needs of the users and the surrounding environment.

As I am only a year 2 student, I cannot fully understand everything they said. I realize that I still have a lot to learn in the future. This trip has been an interesting experience to see many engineering concepts applied to real life. I hope that I will have the chance to further participate in the Daping project and see it through to completion.