

Reflection of working trip to Daping (8-10 Oct 2016)

By Tai Ho Ting Louis – Beng (CivE) II

In order to supervise the construction in Daping Primary School Teacher's Dormitory and to evaluate the nearby collapsed bridges damaged by flood, a trip from 8th October 2016 to 10th October 2016 led by Prof L.G. Tham and Prof C.K. Mak was held and this is my first working trip after joining Project Mingde. Including myself, six Mingde Project members have participated in the trip. It was really a valuable experience for all of us, not only as civil engineering students, but also as a global citizen.

First, we met at the Lok Ma Chau MTR station. It took the whole first day to travel from Hong Kong to Tonglian, where our hostel is situated at. Even though it was really tiring, we had a lot of chances to enjoy the gorgeous scenery of Guangxi. After arriving at the hostel, we had a meeting to talk about works to be done on the following day. Waking up early on the second day, we started our journey to Daping. On the way, we visited the Chaoyang Bridge, which is previously built by Project Mingde. After that, we drove up a newly built concrete road and go straight to Daping. However, the road was still in construction and we have to stop the car at a point. I then understand why it had been a difficulty for our construction in Daping.

Arriving at Daping, we immediately saw kids running and playing around with basic, simple toys. I wonder how easy they are to be happy and fulfilled which is so different from kids in Hong Kong, or even ourselves. We then talked with Engineer Luk, raising our inquiries and concerns. At first, I thought he would be a mean person and not willing to answer us. However, I was so ashamed of my own thought after meeting him. He was so kind and answered our questions in detail. We learnt a lot and understood more on-site issues from this skilled, experienced engineer. This is not my first "site visit" but this is an experience so much different from the other "site visits" because have prepared and participated in the work in this visit. Even though we have prepared for the work on site previously, there is still a lot room for improvement and we could be much better next time after having this experience.

Another remarkable experience in Daping is the lunch with Daping teachers. They were so kind and prepared so many dishes and wine for us. However, we observed that the students only have very simple lunch with only rice and vegetables. It was really our pleasure that they took their best food and wine to welcome us and we really enjoyed them. We hope that our work is really helpful to them and could

create a better environment for them.

For the second part of our trip, we visited three collapsed bridges nearby which were damaged by flood. After talking to the villagers, I knew that they really love their own village and hope that we could help them or participate in the reconstruction of bridges. However, as observed on the way and through communication, the damages were caused not by water, but by the timber logs brought by water. If the irresponsible timber farming activities continue, new bridges will also be damaged by the strong impact force regardless of how strong the bridge will be. On this part, I understood how human activities could affect nature, and the harm would finally go back to us.

This is a really fruitful trip. We took a long time to travel back and forth, which is tiring, but at the same time we have got a lot of opportunities to learn from Prof. Tham and Prof. Mak. They were so experienced and kind, and were willing to teach us a lot. I would definitely apply for it if there is another trip in the future.