

Since this is my second trip to GuangXi, I would inevitably compare between the two experiences.

My last trip is to carry out surveying work on site for footbridge construction, which was purely a technical visit. It was rush – as we missed the train – and time was limited for our work to be done. We were even discussing the CAD drawing details on the return trip to Hong Kong.

This trip, in comparison, was more leisure. We have more time than we needed to meet the objectives and the additional time gave a bit more human touch to the trip. During the 2 day we spent, I was able to experience what actual 'ground improvement' looks like by weeding with a shovel. All of us participated in the construction of a tiny oven (or furnace? Not sure what it should be called) by collecting damp and clustered soil. We then proceed to harvest sweet potatoes from the farmland and bring it back so that it could be heated with the hot and dry soil. We even went on grocery shopping in the first night accompanied by students from SCUT.

And in terms of the technical side of the visit, I believe I learnt more by allowing myself to take part in the interaction between client and contractor. The architect are often criticized for being too creative and idealize the real condition and the contractor would always want to carry out the construction as they did before. And as the middleman we strive to strike a balance and meet the needs of both ends.

Overall the experience is meaningful, the train ride was comfy and the hotel is great. The only improvement I could think of is the time arrangement. Due to the convenience brought by high speed railway, less delay is likely to happen. The lunch time could be better managed such that we could either have an extra hour in the station, or that we could just leave after we had lunch.