

Reflection on Completion and Handover Ceremony of Mingde Jundi Teacher Dormitory

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This is the first time I went to a Project Mingde trip. In this trip, there are mainly two tasks for students in Civil Engineering, which are helping with the set-up of the Handover Ceremony of Mingde Jundi Teacher Dormitory and to visit a damaged bridge in Tengcun.

The schedule of the first day is to travel from Hong Kong to Rongshui, Guangxi. It took a 14 hours trip for us to arrive there. However, it was not a tiring trip. We stopped in some depot at the highways every few hours to get some rest and tried some different food. At night, we arrived at Rongshui, Guangxi. At Rongshui, we tried the spicy rice noodle somewhere near the hotel. The spicy rice noodle was so spicy that had made us sweat and even cry. Many of us had to buy some cold drinks in order to finish the meal.

At around 4 to 5 pm in the morning of the second day, we started to travel from Rongshui to Daping, where the completed project is located at. Although Daping may not be very far away from the map, it took us around 4 to 5 hours to go there. In order to reach Daping, we have to ride through hilly terrain and climb up to more than 1000m above the sea level. Occasionally, we parked the car to take some photos about the beautiful deep valleys and mountains. It is rare to see many steep mountains link together with nearly no sign of human civilization. Since we were located far away from cities and factories, the air was so refreshing that no air-conditioner was needed. We let the cool wind to blow into our car as we ride.

The road we ride on was a narrow concrete pavement that was newly built along the slope of mountains. Therefore, I could observe some sign of shallow failure of slope as we travelled. From my observation, most of the slip surface are in planar shape. Most of the materials that had rolled down are soil or small rock debris. On the other hand, no sign of deep failure, which can form circular slip surface, was observed in my trip. Besides, it is also observed rock there is mainly sedimentary rock since I found beddings in many cliff and cut off slopes. This Mingde Project trip is not only a service trip alone, it was also an opportunity for me to learn more from observing the geological condition there and tried to analyse the condition there using my own knowledge.

After arriving Daping, we were responsible for setting up the venue as well as cleaning the newly-built Jundi Teacher Dormitory to prepare for the ceremony. The work is simple but it can symbolize the completion of the project by Project Mingde with the endeavour of different people from the University of Hong Kong. During the ceremony, I communicate with students, teaching staff and guest attending the ceremony and distributed publications to promote the past projects by project Mingde. In the meantime, local residents prepared fireworks and performance to welcome our arrival. At the end of the ceremony, I could also get a chance to take a photo in front of the memorial plate. It is my honour to witness the historical moment for both Project Mingde and Daping. Then, we had lunch, which cooked from local fish and vegetables, at the school. I also had a taste on the wine made by them. The only thing that I could tell is the alcohol content was quite high. Luckily, I did not get drunk at that time.

At night, we had a visit on the damaged Tencun bridge. The bridge was damaged due to previous flooding. The few pier in the middle of the river sank such that the deck on the top became inclined. This may due to inadequate works in the foundation of the bridge such that significant settlement occurred when the support from underlying soil disappeared during flooding. The damage of the bridge on the two sides of the river was less significant due to the protection of the flooring plain on two side. When Professor Tham discussed with us about the failure mode of the bridge, I realized that it is important as an engineer to analyse things with scientific sense in order to find out the problem.

To conclude, I experienced different things in this trip to Guangxi. Project Mingde is not only an opportunity for a service or something to help others, it can also provide a chance for cultural exchange and obtaining some special practical experience.