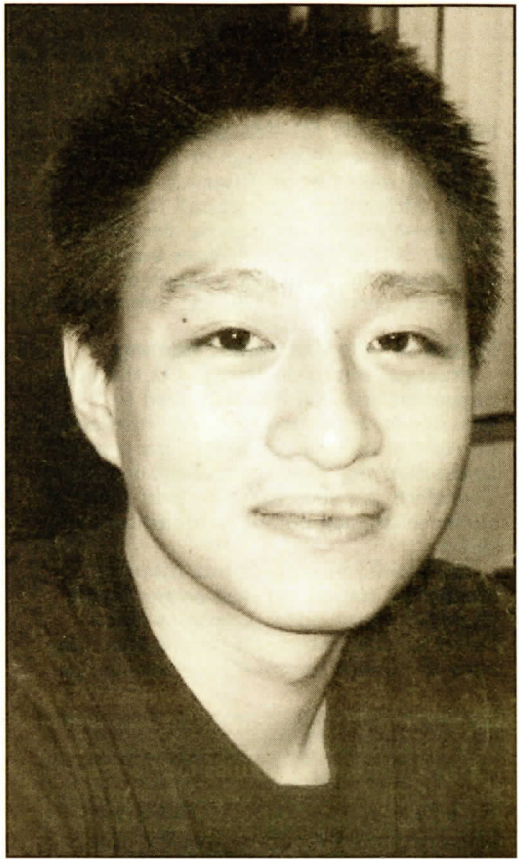


Foreign Student

by
MARY CHEN

It feels
just like
home
for Jean



AS Malaysia prepares to celebrate Merdeka, Indonesian student Jean Mario Abundan is reminded of his country's own push for independence.

The son of Surabaya, the capital city of East Java, shares in his countrymen's nationalistic struggle on November 10, 1945 in his hometown. He said: "A monument was built in my hometown to commemorate those who died on that day. Today, the monument is called *Tugu Pahlawan* (Monument of Heroes)."

Surabaya is also known for its *soto ayam* (chicken soup) which the 25-year-old happily tucks into here as he has no problems at all adapting to the local custom, food or weather.

In fact, Malaysia reminds him of home with many similarities, such as the Malay food, which is equally spicy, the people and their habits, the shopping malls, and even the nightlife.

But what brings Jean to take up Victoria University's Bachelor of Business course offered by Sunway College in Petaling Jaya is definitely the reasonable cost of education.

"The exchange rate for Ringgit to Rupiah is RM1 = Rp2,300, which is relatively much cheaper compared to having to take my degree in the West itself," he says. "And the living expenses here are more or less the same as living in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia."

Jean, who has been at Sunway College since March last year, feels that Malaysia is the place to get an internationally-recognised degree that is at the same time customised to meet the requirements of the locals.

The future accountant had initially planned to pursue his degree in Marketing and International Trade to expand his family retailing business.

"However, after discovering the existence of CPA (certified public accountant) qualification through a seminar held in Sunway College, I decided to get that qualification with the option to take some Marketing subjects as my electives," he says.

"I believe that what I have learned so far will be useful to me in pursuing my dreams to be successful in the business field."

Jean feels that tertiary education should not be too academically-oriented but it should also include the chance to experience the real working environment.

"This can be done by allowing students to work with low pay at companies, factories or offices related to their fields of study," he says.

Besides preparing the students for the real world, the firms will also have the chance to screen the prospective applicants and this will benefit both the employers and the employee-to-be."

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