Japan is accelerating education internationalisation by targeting to invite as many as 300,000 international students. This would include ‘kosen’ from throughout Japan which is the significant part in achieving the target. Kosen means Polytechnic, currently there are 63 polytechnics in all prefectures of Japan. “One of the efforts in internationalisation is organising Asian Student Kosen Experience Program which is held annually by Kosen that invites students from vocational school from various countries in Asia,” said Dr. Wikan Sakarinto on UGM campus on Friday (21/9).

Asian Student Kosen Experience Program year 2012 is held at the Toyama National College of Technology from 10 - 15 September 2012. Indonesia is represented by three UGM Vocational School students, M. Shalahudin, David Sitompul, and Moeh Imam, who had passed several tests before. They joined general lectures and completed group assignments. They also make visits to big industrial companies, such as YKK and Fujikoshi, smart robot in Toyama.

"It is indeed a worthwhile experience to be able to see modern robot technology in both Japanese companies. Participants are also able to see the Kurobe Gorge giant dam that has significantly supplied electrical energy to all Japan during the Fukushima Daiichi reactor leakage after the tsunami in 2011," said Wikan.

Students from various countries including China, Korea, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Malaysia, Mongolia, Indonesia and the Philippines are invited to join cultural programmes, such as judo and tea ceremony. They enjoyed the international friendship very much in every activity. By the end of the programmes, the Indonesian team are selected in the 3 biggest contenders after presenting all activities. “At the closing ceremony we were invited to participate again in year 2013 in Tomakomai Kosen, a kosen in Hokkaido, North Japan,” said the Chairman of Mechanical Engineering Diploma Program in the School.
Wikan explained further that due to the participation at the *Asian Kosen Experience Program*, UGM Vocational School had the advantage to realise student exchange program between UGM and Toyama Kosen. Even Vice President of Toyama Kosen, Dr. Yoshinori Naruse, promised UGM students to take one-semester study and practice at Toyama Kosen, subject to agreement between the two parties this year. “We don’t have to pay for tuitions for one semester and Toyama Kosen is providing relatively cheap dormitory facilities. UGM students who can complete studies are considered having completed internship and this would be recorded in the final transcript,” he explained.

Wikan Sakarinto hoped that the programme would be able to equip students with international insight, learning experience in an advanced country, and able to master Japanese knowledge in educating the nation which eventually able to take control of world technologies. Besides, students will be able to speak Japanese and have the chance to study and work in Japan. “UGM Vocational School in the near future will visit Akashi Kosen and Kobe University. Obviously, students get positive opportunities with these developments,” Wikan expected.

Learning from Japanese Vocational Schools, Wikan said, they prepare profesional resources that meet the principle of link and match based on the real industrial condition. Kosen applies the composition of 70% practice and 30% theory, with a minimum number of students of 40 while curriculum is built together with industry with many teaching staff are industry practitioners. Indutry participation is supported by government who routinely supports machines provision and other laboratory sophisticated equipment in Kosen. “That was the explanation given by Dr. Masaaki Yoneda, President of Toyama Kosen. Thus, competence-based curriculum is well implemented with the result that Kosen graduates are guaranteed of work opportunities, because users do not have to train new recruits. In other words, companies buy the built-in competence of graduates, which has been long designed and created together with campus authorities,” he concluded.

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