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Sooner Scene

By R. BOYD GUNNING
Executive Secretary
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THE MOST INTERESTING students on the O. U. campus are the foreign students. They represent nearly every social and cultural environment of the free world. Most of them are selected by rigorous methods of competitive examination. They return to their native lands as engineers, scientists and specialists ready to assume positions of responsibility.

Typical of the interesting students now on the campus is Irene Lewkowicz, a small, bright-eyed sophomore from Lima, Peru. Irene was born in Poland at a low point in history. Her father was killed by the German onslaught in 1940. She and her mother fled to Paris and lived there until her mother died, leaving Irene eight years old and homeless.

An aunt and uncle located Irene in Paris and offered her a home with them in Peru. She now is in Oklahoma studying languages, preparing for a career as an interpreter with the United Nations. Irene has no scholarship and works part-time to help pay her expenses at O. U. She is president of the Spanish Club.

Jhong Lee is another colorful personality. A senior in electrical engineering, he hopes to play a part in rebuilding his native Korean industries that were destroyed by war.

Jhong grew up on a farm in North Korea. When the communists opened hostilities, Jhong joined the ROK Army. He fought side by side with other UN troops for two years before coming to this country to prepare himself for a career as a professional engineer. Jhong is president of the O. U. Asia Club and is active in student affairs. His finances are so limited that he has seldom had more than 50 cents a day for meals.

A few years ago Eric Lunde, an advanced student of journalism from Oslo, Norway, was on the O. U. campus. He spoke to many state clubs and organizations during his days here. He was so enthusiastic about the University that he persuaded the Scandinavian Club of Oklahoma City to sponsor another student from

that area. As a result of his efforts, Lars Tobisson of Gutenberg, Sweden, enrolled this year at O. U.

The Oklahoma students have been good friends to their foreign classmates. Through the effort of a local student group, the Norwegian Institute of Technology was asked to recommend a student who might study here this year. The result, Eric Tondevold of Trondheim, Norway, is now on campus working in petroleum engineering. The students organized assistance from various sources to provide him with a Fulbright Travel Grant, an O. U. Fee Scholarship, and room and board from a local fraternity. His performance has been a credit to all concerned.

One of the most important areas of study for foreign students is public health. Many of them have been sent here through the cooperation of the World Health Organization of the UN and the International Cooperative Administration, formerly known as the Point Four program.

Three of the most interesting of public health students now on campus are Tapeni Faaouaso, a Polynesian, who is the first native of Western Samoa to study anywhere in the U. S.; Jake Nah of Liberia, and Gabriel Tekka of Ethiopia.

The largest single group of foreign students come from Canada. Most of these boys are graduates of Mount Royal College at Calgary. (It is no accident that a large number of Mount Royal alumni attend O. U. That institution has established a pre-engineering curriculum, devised to meet specifically O. U.'s petroleum engineering requirements.)

My opinion of the Canadian students is that they more nearly typify the splendid characteristics of the Southwestern pioneers than do many of our own Oklahomans.

Altogether there are 285 foreign students on the campus from 45 countries. Ninety percent of them are studying engineering and only fifteen percent hold scholarships of any kind.

These foreign students are so well integrated into the student life that an observer would find it difficult to tell which students are native and which are from other lands.

O. U. has more foreign students than any other college or university in the Big Eight Conference area. We are glad they are here. They contribute substantially to the educational experience of all students.

It is a privilege to know these fine people, personally. We have much to learn from them. I shall never forget how pleased Mrs. Gunning and I were to be invited to Bing Yee's wedding. Bing was a geo-

logical engineering student and active in student affairs. He served as first president of the International Students Club and initiated many worthwhile programs as an undergraduate. His wedding was a beautiful ceremony, Christian and oriental. After nearly ten years, I still remember the humility and reverence of the occasion.

I often think that our foreign students make a much better impression upon us than we do upon them. All too often they come to our country, attend our university classes, live in our student housing and leave knowing very little indeed about how we Americans live at home. This is a situation that alumni can remedy.

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