



Sophomore Therese Doepner
of Zurich, Switzerland,
dresses for her role as a Japanese geisha
in a University Playhouse production

The Story of O.U.'s Foreign-Born

BOUNDARIES TOO SMALL FOR THEM

By CAROL J. ROBINSON, '59

STUDENTS here from distant states are always bombarded with the same question—"Why on earth did you come to a college so far away from home?" But there are 267 O. U. collegians who measure distance from home in terms of countries, not states.

From 39 foreign countries these students descend upon the Norman campus adding a cosmopolitan air to the relaxed, ivy-clad atmosphere. Representing religions from Catholic and Protestant to Moslem, Hindu

and Buddhist, students from five continents enrol at O. U. each year.

Only the freshmen give a second glance to the students from India, 15 of them, some still wearing their traditional native costumes, the women in their colorful saris, the bearded men in carefully wrapped turbans.

Before World War II, O. U. received from 10 to 20 students a year from beyond our continental limits; and the country as a whole attracted only 5,000. Today 50,000 foreign students enter the United States, with the O. U. enrolment annually passing the 250 mark.

And why do they come deep into the midwest in search of a college?

In general their reasons could be classed as more academic than those of their American counterparts. Nearly 60 percent of the foreign students choose O. U. for its internationally known college of engineering. Geology, sanitary science, business administration, architecture and physics also rank high on the list, which includes nearly every area of the university program.

Many of them were directed to O. U. by alumni or the American consul in their countries, others by business associates both in American and foreign companies. Of the 73 Canadians at O. U., 37 come from Calgary, Alberta, where Mount Royal junior college is the University's recruiter. Mount Royal uses the O. U. bulletin as a guide in outlining its preparatory work! After a Canadian completes two years in the junior college, the Sooner upperclassman program is made to order.

Some foreign students even represent second generation Sooners or have followed brothers and sisters to Norman. One such brother act is that of Mahfouz Rafidi, sophomore brother of Naim Rafidi who holds three O. U. degrees and is now employed by Sinclair Oil Co. in Covington. The Rafidis are originally from the Jordanian section of Jerusalem.

The Rafidi story is somewhat unusual in that very few O. U. foreign students remain in this country after graduation. Each student signs an agreement before leaving for the United States that he will return home upon completion of his studies.

"After all, we get the cream of the crop over here," J. Gene Russell, foreign student co-ordinator, explains. "It would hardly be good foreign relations to drain the best talent out of these countries."

But Russell adds that most of the students want to return home and have little desire to remain.

Most of the foreign students go home once during an average four-year stay in

Norman between their sophomore and junior years. However, the homesickness you might expect to encounter isn't as important as among American students studying abroad.

"One reason homesickness is so insignificant a factor," Russell contends, "is the hospitality the foreign students find on the O. U. campus. They are all welcome and often are invited home by both the students and the Norman residents."

The visiting students do a certain amount of clinging together which Russell admits he does not try to discourage, although he does encourage his charges to select American roommates.

As a group, foreign students are good mixers and enthusiastic participants. The International club, under the sponsorship of Russell, is the tie-together organization for students of all nationalities, including Americans. The Arab club, sponsored by Dr. John Paul Duncan, professor of government; the Asian club, under the guiding hand of Dr. Henry R. Angelino, associate professor of education; and the Spanish club, with Karl J. Reinhart, instructor in modern languages, are among the more active campus groups.

Russell was given the full-time administrative post of co-ordinating the activities of foreign students in August, 1956. Before that time one of the University professors served as academic advisor to the students.

While foreign students are given every privilege accorded American students at O.U., they are also bound by the same regulations. They must live in University housing unless they are past the 25-year age minimum for apartment dwellers. Exceptions are occasionally made, such as the one for a student who could not become accustomed to American food and preferred to cook his own meals.

The food problem is a common one for most of the foreign students, but a problem that usually solves itself after the first couple of weeks. The far eastern and middle eastern students are sometimes put on a special diet, worked out by the student health service, until they become used to the richer foods.

As a rule, the 80 South American students, largest of the continental groups, have less trouble with the O.U. menu. This year, however, diet troubles forced one young South American to give up and go home.

O.U.'s foreign population is at present undergoing a Bolivian boom. The number of students from that country, normally around three or four, jumped to 15 this year. Co-ordinator Russell did some check-



West Germany's Otto Hinkelmann



India's M. Shakuntla and Sri Krishen



Bolivia's J. Pacheco Valiente



Korea's In-Sook Kim and Je Myung Woo

ing and found that all but three of the top executives of the Bolivian National Oil Co., the nation's largest, are O.U. graduates—a fact which no doubt influenced the college choice of the petroleum-minded South Americans.

Many of the non-citizen Sooners are attending the University on scholarships from private corporations, especially the large oil companies. However, the majority, 85 per cent, in fact, are financed by their own funds or by their families. The rest of the foreign students receive aid either from their own governments or from the United States.

The foreign students as a group are a little older than the American collegians, averaging about 19 years old as entering students. They enter O.U. both as freshmen just out of high school and for specialized training in their chosen field. The industrial scholarship students are usually employees of the company. Most of the college-hopefuls need about two years to get their money together and their credentials in order.

No foreign student is permitted to work during his first year at O.U., the period when he is expected to devote all his time to academics and adjustment. After that first year permission for part-time jobs is granted by the immigration authorities only in cases of real financial need or to students needing practical training in their fields.

While some of the foreign students spend the holidays in the homes of their American classmates, the majority prefer to travel during the vacations. They generally travel in groups and show a preference for the large metropolitan areas.

"They want to make the most of their education here in the United States," Russell explains, "and they try not to miss a thing."

In-Sook-Kim, freshman coed from Seoul, Korea, spent Thanksgiving in New York with her father, S. K. Kim, a member of the Republic of Korea's house of representatives and publisher of several Korean newspapers. The father was on the O.U. campus for the Veterans' day observance, November 11, when In-Sook and the five other Korean students placed a wreath on the university monument to veterans of the Korean conflict.

As a whole the middle eastern men students, and some far easterners, think Yankee independence has gone too far and that American women have been given too much freedom. Advocates of the father-controlled family, mother in the home theory, these students take a dim view of the casual coed in her bermuda shorts.

This is not strictly a male view by any means. Tokuko "Nora" Nakamura, a guest of the Pi Beta Phi sorority, refused to wear a birthday gift from her roommates—a pair of bermuda shorts. It seems that they are too much like what the well-dressed Japanese girl wears under her kimono.

A rather unique group among the foreign students joined the student body in February, 1957, in the form of 12 Hungarian refugee students, participants in the ill-fated Communist revolt. The requirement that foreign students in American colleges be able to speak and write English was relaxed for the Hungarians, who between them knew only a handful of English words. Special English classes were instituted for the refugees.

Just before Christmas, 1957, the Hungarian students staged an all-University Christmas party with the aid of Dr. Ste-

phan Borhegyi, then director of O.U.'s Stovall museum and now head of the Milwaukee museum.

Earlier the Hungarian students themselves were guests at a party in the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority house when the Hungarian Olympic swimming team stopped in Norman during its cross-country tour. This party was the first the swimmers had attended since they had refused to return home from the Olympic games in Australia.

Four of the original dozen Hungarians are still studying at O.U. The rest have either transferred to other colleges to pursue special fields of interest or have taken jobs in various parts of the country. Several have married since their arrival.

About 15 per cent of the regular foreign student enrolment are married before coming to the United States. Some bring their

Alumnus from Jordan

UNLIKE most of O.U.'s foreign students, Naim Rafidi, who earned three engineering degrees at O.U., has decided to live in the United States. His unusual history, checkered with many North and South American trips, odd summer jobs, scholarships, ambitions, and honors (including the ambition to write great love lyrics in Arabic, and the honor of winning third place in the 1956 Engineers' Beard Contest) is most unusual in the comic opera aspects of his marriage.



Immigrant Rafidi poses with his wife.

Returning to Jordan in 1958 to visit his family, Naim found himself visiting not only his family but the families of all the eligible girls in town (including a 14-year-old). Patiently Naim answered *la* (no) until he felt obliged to escape from the town's matchmakers and hole up in a hotel.

Reluctantly, his family accepted his American notions of courtship and agreed not to pester him if he'd come home.

Naim came home happy as a bachelor. But a few days prior to his return to the United States, he accidentally saw a beautiful girl, and . . .

The rest is another chapter in the history of love at first sight.

Naim got an extension from Sinclair Oil & Gas Company (his employer) and convinced Karimeh (his love-at-first-sight) that she should marry him. Today, Immigrant Rafidi is preparing a home in nearby Enid for his wife, who is waiting for her visa approval.



The Escobars, Julio and Sonia, enjoy an evening's play with their daughter, Teresina. Teresina was born in Norman—under near-tragic circumstances.

THE Escobars of Guatemala City have particularly warm memories of the people in Norman. Julio and Sonia Escobar came directly to O.U. following their honeymoon, Julio to enrol on a postgraduate engineering scholarship.

Then the Escobars learned they were going to have a baby—and that there was some danger since they had incompatible blood types. The danger is almost negligible if the doctor is aware of the situation. But on the night the Escobar baby chose to arrive, their own doctor was unavailable and another doctor, ignorant of the Rh situation, was hurriedly called in.

Rapidly he ordered a nurse to phone the radio station, and within seconds an emergency request broke into the dormitories and homes of Norman. Then, in less time than it takes to play a *Sooner Sanctum* record, blood donors began arriving at the hospital faster than the nurses could take care of them. One of those volunteers saved Teresina's life.

Today Teresina—the American daughter of the Guatemalan Escobars (she has a dual citizenship)—is a wonderfully noisy baby in Guatemala City. Her father is vice-director of the city's water supply and a part-time instructor of algebra at San Carlos University; her mother is a full-time instructor of how a Sooner in Guatemala should behave herself.

Alumnus from Guatemala

families with them and the University finds them housing. Russell says that practically none of the students marry after arriving in this country.

Sooners traveling in foreign countries frequently are guests of O.U. foreign student alumni. Last summer journalism graduate Ted Shimizu, now with the Tokyo staff of United Press International, played host to the student groups touring Southeast Asia with Dr. Percy Buchanan, director of O.U.'s Institute of Asian Affairs.

One of Shimizu's classmates, Erik Lunde, is now with the Associated Press in Oslo, Norway.

The foreign students at O.U. contribute more than an international flavor to the campus, however. Many of them are outstanding in extra-curricular realm at the University.

No. 1 track man this year is Gale Hodgson, Johannesburg, South Africa, who with his countrymen on the track team, Ted Kleynhans, Cape Town, and Randolph Youngworth, Johannesburg, are following admirably in the athletic tradition of former Olympic swimming star Peter Duncan, also a South African.

Michael Lindsay, London, England, is the O.U. shotput man, while the swimming team numbers Hungarian Zsolt Szilagyi and Leung-Wang Lau of Hong Kong among its members. Therese Doepfner of Switzerland is seen with regularity in the productions of the school of drama.

Academically the foreign students are outstanding both individually and as a group. In adaptability, their accomplishments are little short of amazing.

But no matter how much these globe-trotting students may have gained at O.U. in academics and in understanding "those

crazy Americans," they have given equally to the Sooners who shared their experience.

Ecuador, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Indonesia, Iran cease to be merely places on the map or names on the newscast when an O.U. man, class of '59, happens to be a part of the gov-

ernment, the press, industry or education in one of these countries.

And no doubt having a Big Red roter in Pakistan does American stock as much good as foreign aid and Care packages put together.



S. N. Hu (center) with his wife and Senator Monroney (right) at a refinery meal.

Alumnus from Formosa

THE complex Kaoshiung oil refinery in southwest Formosa is an impressive argument for the blending of East with West. Smashed by American bombers during World War II, the refinery was a bittersweet ruin for the Nationalist Chinese when they came by the millions to Formosa in 1949. Kaoshiung refinery meant fuel, trade, and jobs—if it could only be rebuilt.

Rebuilding it seemed an appalling task in that there were very few engineers on the island. Happily, one of these engineers was O.U. graduate Jerome S. N. Hu.

Facing problems like not having workers who could read blueprints, Hu, with considerable patience and engineering ingenuity, managed the entire rebuilding with what local talent he could muster (the blueprint problem Hu solved by constructing to-scale models which the workers could see rather than read). His Sooner-trained ingenuity rebuilt the Kaoshiung refinery and made the free world stronger.