

# Toward international understanding

By Ram Nandan P. Singh

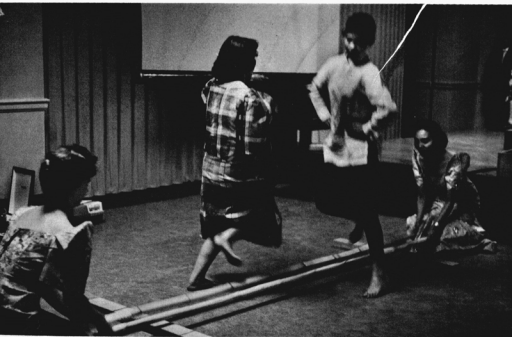
Exchange of students between countries is as old as organized education itself. We are well aware of the extent to which students of the Roman World frequented the schools of Athens and Alexandria. In our own days international exchanges form an essential groundwork in creating cooperation between peoples in different cultures of the globe. As a long term measure, they bring men and women as human beings face to face with each other. People no doubt vary greatly in their thinking and acting, but the ultimate aspiration of every human breathing soul is the same. The exchange also confronts people with first hand experience with other cultures and establishes a link in communication which is so vital in creating better understanding.

Six countries of the world account for the greatest number of foreign students enrolled. Population-wise

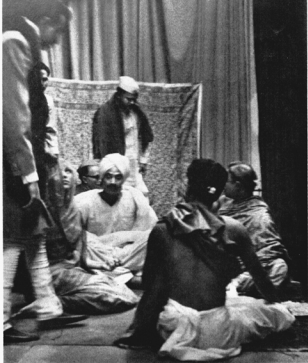
this is as follows: U.S.A. 55,000; France 16,827; U.S.S.R. 12,565; Argentina 11,001; United Kingdom 10,443; and Federal Republic of Germany 9,643.

The University of Missouri with 270 enrolled from more than forty countries has in recent years helped bring the local community and student body together. The orientation program called *Operation: International Friendship*, organized in September, 1960, featured a reception for all new foreign students. It provided an opportunity to meet and talk with University officials, faculty and student leaders. On the following days there were luncheons, more panel discussions, tours, and a picnic at the Cosmo Park sponsored by the Columbia Lions Club.

The preceding year witnessed remarkable programs in the field of international relations and it is worth noting some of these programs organized by the



*The "Tinikling Dance," from the Philippines, in which two bamboo poles are tapped together rhythmically as two girls dance in and out.*



*A scene from dramatic performance by Indian students portraying wedding customs.*



*A shy Oriental smile for visitors to exhibits at Nations on Parade.*

## International continued

University Cosmopolitan Club. This organization is a University-recognized body, membership in which is open to all foreign students and interested American students.

*Nations on Parade:* The program usually takes place during the spring semester and includes an international dress pageant and an exhibition of arts and crafts from various countries. This all-day entertaining program is eagerly awaited by the Columbians and local students.

*Around the World in Sixty Minutes:* A colorful and entertaining travelogue program featuring dances, jokes and customs of various countries.

*The Feast of Nations.* Attended by about 380 people, this international dinner was one of the most successful programs on the campus. The University YM-YWCA cooperated with the University Cosmopolitan Club members who prepared delicious dishes from twenty nations and served them at one dinner table. A variety show was presented. Dr. Elmer Ellis, our University president, was the guest speaker.



*Arts and crafts from Thailand are among the exhibits at popular Nations on Parade event.*



*Students in Cuban dance at Latin American Evening organized by University Cosmopolitan Club.*

*The Embassy Whirl:* The International clubs of Stephens and Christian colleges cooperated with the University in putting on this "social night" which consisted of ballroom dancing and an international floor show.

*Courtship, Marriage and Love Around the World* was a panel discussion organized by the University international organizations; the panelists brought out interesting ideas of prevailing customs in matrimony in different parts of the globe. *Ideas That Moved the World* featured short biographies of great men of the world, their beliefs and philosophies.

The president of the University holds a reception once a year in honor of all foreign students. In the past year, the Columbia Council of International Students, the University YM-YWCA and the Columbia Council of Church Women have made valuable contributions in this history-making process.

The frontiers of international relations have widened considerably in the last two years. A good example of one such process in action presently is the YM-YWCA International Seminar called "Acquaintance in Depth." The idea was initiated to confront these "non-official ambassadors" with oppor-

tunities so that there could be more than just casual acquaintance with their American counterparts. A series of eight meetings were planned on such topics as President Kennedy's Peace Corps, customs and superstitions, international games, etc. Four of the seminars have already been held.

As programs get older, new ideas and plans need to be brought in to sustain lively interest of our foreign visitors as also our own people. To study in a land other than one's own is an opportunity of far reaching consequences. At the same time it brings in its trail problems never seen before.

The campus organizations who have fostered such activities are to be complimented for sharing with us their knowledge and skills. The writer is very optimistic that this operation in international understanding will expand to a dimension unconceived so far, and with careful handling, will open up horizons toward better human resources throughout the globe.

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