

Japanese student is getting her share of 'Americanese'

By PATRICIA LACROIX

If you think that being American and getting through college courses is tough, you ought to try being Japanese and getting through American college courses.

That is exactly what Junko Mase, 22, is doing. She is one of three Japanese students participating in a student exchange program sponsored through Oakland University.

Through the program, three American students attend college for one year in Japan and three Japanese students attend college at Oakland University for one year.

Miss Mase, a soft spoken but aggressive woman, came to the U.S. last August. She will complete classes at OU this spring, spend some time traveling in the U.S. and then return to Japan in July.

She is studying American History and political science at OU while aiming for her teaching certificate. Once she returns to Japan, she will have to take three more classes, she said, before she earns her degree.

BUT ALL THAT is still in the future, and there's a lot Miss Mase has to do before then.

And there are a lot of American traditions and customs to get used to. "Speaking English is much more difficult than Japanese," she told the first-grade students of Sally Scholtz at Woodward Elementary School on Friday.

In English, she explained, the letter "a" can have many different pronunciations: one for the word "cat," another for the word "American." This results in confusion, she said. But in Japanese, each sound is unique to itself, she said.

But the English language is "more scientific" than Japanese, she said.

Then there is the little matter of grocery shopping.

In Japan, people go to the grocery store about once a day and only carry a grocery bag. Since more people include fresh fish in their diet, the daily shopping trip is a necessity, she explained. But in the U.S., she said, people go to the store less often, requiring the use of metal carts.

There is also the matter of life in the dorm. In Japan, she said, she commutes to the University of Japan. But here, she lives in one of the Oakland University dormitories.

Part of the transition to life in America is made easier through her "host family," Russell and Lea Hammel of Rochester. Weekend visits and sight-seeing are part of their responsibilities, she said.

She has already visited the Renaissance Center in downtown Detroit. Before she leaves for Japan, she said that she will be visiting New York City, Boston and San Francisco.

Another thing that has to be done before leaving the U.S. is picking out a truly genuine American gift for her parents in Japan.

Picking out a gift for her brothers (both of them younger than her, one in college and one in high school) was much easier; they wanted American rock 'n' roll record albums.

Stratford actress rises fast

Victoria Snow, a young Ancester-born Canadian actress who turned professional only last summer, has been chosen to replace the leading lady of the Stratford (Ont.) Festival production of the musical "Happy New Year."

Initially engaged to play a small role in the production, Miss Snow was chosen to understudy the major role of Linda

by director Burt Shevelove when Virginia Sandifur, the leading lady, became ill with pneumonia after only a week's rehearsal.

Doctors said Miss Sandifur would be unable to rehearse for at least two weeks, which led to a search in both Canada and the United States for an actress/singer to understudy the production's

crucial role. Shevelove, a connoisseur of theatrical talent with wide experience in musical theater, decided that the young Canadian actress should have a chance.

"I THINK she's an enormously gifted girl and will, I am sure, be a great success one day. She's just lovely for the part," Shevelove said.

Miss Snow performed the role of Linda — opposite Edward Evans and Leigh Beery — at rehearsals during the weeks that followed and impressed others in the company with her professionalism and skill.

When Miss Sandifur's illness forced her to withdraw from the production, Miss Snow was lifted — literally from the

chorus — into the star spot of the show.

She was first spotted by the festival when artistic director Robin Phillips saw her performing in "Gabriel" at Hamilton Place in 1974. This past fall, Phillips saw her again when she was appearing as a singer/dancer in the chorus of Theater London's production of "Kiss Me Kate."

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OU team asks for help

Your knowledge of historical data or your collection of historical artifacts is exactly what a team of researchers at Oakland University is after.

Richard Stamps, an OU anthropologist, John Cameron, chairman of the OU Department of Art and Art History, and Richard Zarek, an archaeology research associate at OU, have been awarded a grant through the federal government to document all the historical sites within Oakland County.

Because the project is so massive — it is part of a national effort to document historical sites and buildings — the team is asking for assistance from the people who the land the best: the people who live there.

Questionnaires are being distributed through the OU Laboratory of Archaeology. The forms ask for people to help them pinpoint possible historical materials or sites.

Indian materials and materials from the colonial days are sought. The team is also asking for written materials, including floor plans of old buildings, maps of the area and photographs.

FINALLY, THE team is asking people who fill out the questionnaire if they know any other people who may know more to help with the study. The appeal for help was made locally at last week's Oakland Township Historical Society's annual meeting.

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