

Foreign students stay here for holidays

By **Tonnie Dakin**
Of the Emerald

For most University students, Christmas is a time to travel home and be with family and friends. For foreign students, who often are unable to go home for the holidays, there are other options available.

Most foreign students stay in the United States during Christmas break, said Margo Ramsing, a University foreign student adviser. There are programs set up with networks all over the United States that allow foreign students not only to spend Christmas with a host family but to travel to other parts of America while doing it, she said.

Most often students pay for their own transportation to and from their host family's city, but once arrived, they are hosted by the community, Ramsing said.

There are also church groups that cater to foreign students and place them with host families around the country, she said.

Students who wish to stay in Eugene may be able to spend the holidays with their "friendship family," Ramsing said.

"A friendship family is just what it says, they volunteer to be a friend to the foreign student, and sometimes they will invite the student to spend time with them at Christmas," she said.

For some foreign students, Christmas is a religious holiday, but for others it is simply a break from school, she said.

"To most Europeans, the holidays complement ours," Ramsing said. "But when you talk about Asian and Eastern countries, they may not have the same feelings about the holiday that Americans do."

At the International House, a cooperative living situation for foreign students, none of the students are planning to go home for Christmas, said Hiroshi Inoue, president of the house and a graduate student in

cultural anthropology who is from Japan.

The house, located at 560 E. 11th Ave., is owned by a church and most of the students living there are Christians, Inoue said. To celebrate the holiday the students will decorate the house, go Christmas caroling and have a Christmas party, he said.

"We're trying to follow the American example of Christmas," Inoue said.

Many of the 14 students living at the house plan to travel or visit friends, he added.

Tausif Kahn, a senior economics major from Pakistan, did not go home for Christmas last year, he said. Instead, he traveled to San Francisco with some friends who also were not leaving the United States, he said.

Most foreign students who don't go home to their native country do leave Eugene, Kahn said.

"If I stayed here I think it

might bother me because all of my friends who I hang out with would have left," he said.

This year, Kahn plans to travel to Seattle or Vancouver because "it's just like a holiday off," he said.

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