

# About This Website

## About "*Die Kreuzungsstelle*"

"*Die Kreuzungsstelle*" is a forum aimed at individuals who are labeled multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial and who were born in Japan (and live there). In this website, there are essays written by individuals who define themselves as multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial, and almost all the essays are written in Japanese, except for the ones on the English pages(One of the owner's friends helped to translate the Japanese writings into English).

## What does "*Die Kreuzungsstelle*" mean?

"*Die Kreuzungsstelle*" is a German word that means "crossroad" (to be exact, in German, *Kreuzung* means "crossroad"). The name was chosen in hope that many individuals will meet at this site and communicate with each other.

Perhaps, people would imagine that the choice of a website name may pertain to something deep or meaningful, such as the owner's heritage, but it was not with such romantic reasoning that the name was chosen, but rather, the reasoning was more practical and the name was chosen for its convenience in finding it in on Yahoo or Google search engine.

If the English word "crossroad" or "*Kousaten* (Japanese)" would have been chosen, this site would not be as easy to find as it is now, due to the flood of websites using similar names. But this German word makes it easier, so it was chosen. However, if a visitor prefers to refer to this site using another language, such as *Kousaten* (Japanese), *Carrefour*(French), *Encrucijada* (Spanish) or any other language, such use is permitted.

## What is the terminology used for multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals in Japan?

*Haafu* is the most popular term used to label "first generation" of multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals in Japan. The word *Haafu* is adopted from the English word "half".

However, there are more names. The typical name is *Daburu* (adopted from "double"), *Konketsu* (mixed-blood/race/ethnic), *Konketsuji* (mixed race/blood/ethnic children), *Hapa* (originally a Hawaiian word and is not widely used in Japan).

The name *Haafu* and *Daburu* will be only used by the first generation and *Konketsu* and *Konketsuji* can be

used by every generations, but *Konketsuji* is politically incorrect and is not widely used. In addition, to label second generation of multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals, whose father or mother were labeled *Haafu*, is *Kuoutaa*(adopted from "Quarter").

Each name has a different meaning and I cannot say which one is the best. But, at this moment, the most popular name used in Japanese society to label the first generation of multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals is *Haafu*.

## History

"*Die Kreuzungsstelle*" was set up on September 19th, 2002. During the first phase of the website, the initial aim was to find out more about individuals with similar interests in Japan and also to prevent the information of those individuals who are labeled *Haafu* (or other names).

In Japan, as in other countries, there are many stereotypes about multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals. More details will be discussed in the essays of this site. To give one prevailing stereotype, individuals who are labeled *Haafu* are expected to be bilingual in Japan. From my own experiences and from the experiences of others, I realized not only how predominant this stereotype is, but also how much this stereotype negatively affects those individuals. Because of such situations, this site was set up to eradicate such images.

Since then, some individuals have approved the aim of this site and have contributed essays as well as comments of encouragement. Currently, the number of the voices represented has reached about 70.

Nowadays, technology had spread so that many individuals can easily communicate on the internet. The idea that individuals could meet, not only in cyberspace, but also in real life, sparked the start of the second phase of the website. On January 2004, a meeting was held in Yokohama and by April 2006, fifteen meetings were held in *Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto*. Each time, participants were limited to 4 to 8 persons because such a group size is most conducive for individuals to get to know each other.

From 2007, "*Die Kreuzungsstelle*" entered its third phase. The new challenge was to write some articles in English for the following reasons.

In this global age, English is widely used in business or education or many other fields. To communicate widely, English must be used today. Before this third phase, the information of this site was only available to individuals who could read Japanese; therefore the audience was limited. But when the articles are written in

English, various information and the feelings and voices of individuals can be shared with more people.

During the first phase, the aim was to find individuals in Japan with similar interests. The second phase was characterized by the move to meet in the real world. From the third phase, the aim has shifted to disseminate the experiences of individuals throughout the world. Therefore, to share the thoughts of and information about multi/mixed/bi-ethnic/racial individuals is the aim of the third and current phase. For this reason, this English page was created.

### **About the owner of the website**

The owner, Hyoue Okamura(before 2010.9.19 used a penname; Nikolaus Horstmann), who is also a contributing author of essays in this website, was born in 1978 between a German mother and a Japanese father, and has spent most of his life in the *Kansai* region(which includes the famous cities; *Kyoto, Kobe, Osaka, Nara*) in Japan.

In 2002, the owner read the influential book,"*Amerajian no Kodomotachi*"\*, written by Stephen Murphy-Shigematsu, a psychologist and the organizer of "Multicultural Leadership", whose father is Irish-American and whose mother is Japanese. While reading this book, the owner has started to rethink of himself and the situation of the individuals who labeled *Haafu* in Japan, further inspiring a project that has culminated in the creating of *Die Kreuzungsstelle*.

\* Murphy-Shigematsu,S., 2002, *Amerajian no kodomotachi: Shirarezaru mainoritii mondai (Amerasian children: An unknown minority problem)*, Tokyo: Shyueisha.