



## Broken Stereotypes: Stories from Third Culture Kids

*Christie Druktuld*

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“Where are you from?” This is a common enough question when people meet and start to get to know one another. And many of us would have no difficulty responding to such a simple query, but for Third Culture Kids the answer is more complicated. In their young lives, some have already lived in so many different countries it may even seem like a trick question.

“Third Culture Kids” is a term that has come into use relatively recently. It refers to those children who are living in a culture other than that of their parents. These kids are simultaneously learning to maneuver in the culture of their parents, the culture where they are currently living, and a “third culture,” which is a mixture of the two.

The benefits for these children in terms of expanded world views, friendships with children from other cultures, and opportunities to travel and learn multiple languages are obvious. But there are disadvantages, as well. Lacking a consistent “home base,” these children may feel confusion with regard to issues such as patriotism and cultural values. They may also suffer from a bit of an identity crisis, not feeling completely comfortable in any single culture.

In this collection of (often semi-autobiographical) stories, 8th grade students from Suzhou Singapore International School in Suzhou, China offer readers a glimpse into their worlds—both the ups and downs of their unique situations. At times funny, and occasionally sad, their stories bear witness to numerous intercultural misunderstandings or challenges they have observed or experienced.



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