

A Simple Questionnaire on Race

Please answer the following questions quickly and honestly.

The answers are a matter of personal opinion.

Please do not worry about the RIGHT answer.

1. Among human beings, approximately how many races are there? _____
2. What characteristics determine "race"? (Check all that are relevant.)
 skin color height religion brain size
 hair physical strength language intelligence
 facial features nationality culture (other) _____
3. Is any race superior, higher, or better than any other?
 Yes No
If Yes, please explain: _____

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RACE AND RACISM

Race is the concept that some communities of people have physical and psychological traits significantly different from those of other communities. The concept of race has now largely been abandoned by science as being too imprecise and difficult to define. Racism is the belief that some communities of people have physical and psychological traits that that make them significantly inferior or superior to other groups. Some examples of racism are the Nazi ideology of “the master race,” the Dutch Reformed Church’s apartheid theology and the Southern Baptist Church’s doctrine that the enslavement of black people was ordained by God, now repudiated. Some have argued that the Hindu caste system is a form of racism.

The Buddha was probably the first person in history to express doubt about the concept of race and to explicitly condemn racism. In the famous Vasettha Sutta of the Sutta Nipata he says: “Consider grass and trees. Although they do not speak of it, the different species amongst them can be seen. Consider insects ... quadrupeds, reptiles ... fish ... and birds. Although they do not speak of it, the different species amongst them can be seen. Amongst these beings the differences are manifold and clear whereas amongst humans they are insignificant. Not in hair, head, ears, eyes or mouth, not in nose, lips, eyebrows, neck, shoulders, abdomen or back, not in buttocks, chest, male or female sexual organs, hands or feet, not in fingers, nails, calves, thighs, colour or voice do the differences constitute a species as they do in other beings. The differences amongst humans are insignificant.” (Sn.601-11).

See: *Buddhism and the Race Question*, G. P. Malalasekera and K. N. Jayatilleke, UNESCO (1958) <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0006/000643/064300eo.pdf>>
and
BPS (1974) <<https://www.bps.lk/library-search-select.php?id=wh200>>

From: *Guide To Buddhism A To Z*, by S. Dhammika
<<http://www.buddhisma2z.com/>>