

✓ **BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER**

- ❶ Find out the meaning of the proverb **BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER** and say whether you agree or not.
- ❷ Do you think the concept of beauty is the same or similar all over the world? Make a guess. What is beautiful or attractive in Kenya, Guinea or Korea?
- ❸ Read the following article and find out how culture determines the concept of beauty and appearance.

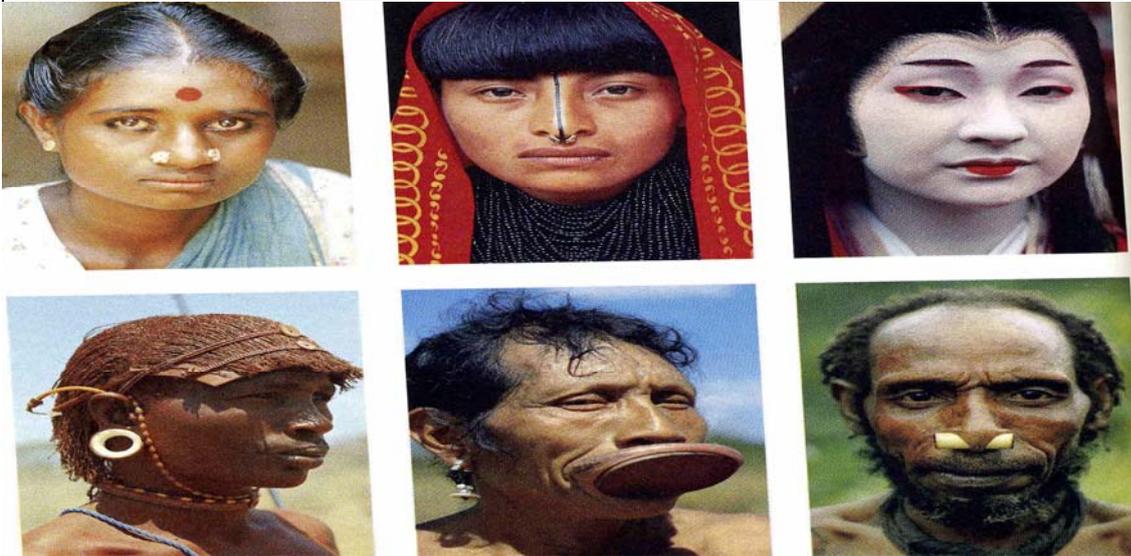
CONCEPTIONS OF BEAUTY

Ideas about beauty and sexual attractiveness vary a great deal from one society to another. But although much is known about conceptions of female beauty in other cultures, there is little information on how other peoples judge the attractiveness of men. The main reason, it seems, is that most societies have more specific ideas about female than about male beauty, for men are much likely to be valued for characteristics others than appearance, such as well and power.

There are few if any universal standards of female attractiveness. Some peoples regard the shape and colour of the eyes as the main determinant of beauty; others are more concerned about the formation of the mouth, nose, or ears.

Cultural preferences in these respects vary widely: the Mayans, for example, admired cross-eyes,

while the Yapese of the South Pacific consider black teeth attractive. In some societies small, slim women are admired, but there is a strong cross-cultural tendency for men to prefer fat women; in some West African societies the sexy woman is one who is positively obese. The Thonga of eastern Africa admire a woman who is tall and powerful; the Tongans of Polynesia are more concerned that a woman's ankles be small. The Masai of eastern Africa prefer women with small breasts, whereas the Apache prefer women with very large breasts. In many tropical societies women do not cover their breasts, but this doesn't mean that the men are in a constant state of erotic frenzy. The breasts are simply not considered a sexual stimulus at all, and attention may focus instead on the legs, buttocks, back or elsewhere.



Conceptions of beauty and sexual attractiveness are cultural learned; in fact, what may be attractive in one culture may seem strange or unattractive in another. The pictures show women from India,

Panama, and Japan, and men from Kenya, Brazil and New Guinea. Concepts of beauty also vary by time and these cultures' concepts of beauty may well vary in the future.