

Culture



Jack GOODY, *The Development of Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. 308 pages, U.S. \$39.50 (cloth), U.S. \$12.95 (paper)

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ers' life cycle rites, which emphasize the primacy of the patriline and its solidarity. While Bennett has clearly based her lengthy accounts of these ritual practices on detailed ethnographic data, she does not always indicate with sufficient clarity which of the associated beliefs she discusses were actually expressed by her village informants directly and which are more general Hindu concepts described by other scholars.

At the heart of the volume, in her analysis of the kinship system, Bennett delineates two contrasting yet interlocking models of kinship relations. In the dominant patrifocal model, the solidarity of agnatic males is cardinal, with males superior to females and age superior to youth. Although affinally related women are needed sources of progeny and labor, they are regarded as dangerous intruders, sexually distracting and threatening to the patriline's unity and purity. (Bennett, however, correctly questions the popular notion that disruptive affinal women are the prime cause of strife within the joint family [p. 179].)

In what Bennett terms the filiafocal model, consanguineal women, especially daughters, are deeply loved and treated as pure and sacred, ritually ranking higher than males. By logical extension, wife-takers—a groom's kinsmen—hold ritual superiority over wife-givers—the bride's kin. A woman's sexuality, so threatening to the ascetic ideal, is, through early marriage and relevant ritual, kept conceptually segregated from her natal kinship ties and associated only with her membership in her husband's patriline. In the home of her birth, a woman is always perceived as a pure virgin. The status of a mother appears to synthesize the opposing categories of affinal and consanguineal female kin.

These pervasive ambivalences concerning women have been described by other researchers for many areas of South Asia. Bennett's special contribution is her clear articulation of these contrasting yet intertwined structural principles and, in the latter half of the book, her detailed analysis of the manner in which they are manifested in a variety of complex rituals and myths. Of particular interest are her discussions of calendrical rites symbolically channeling women's sexuality toward approved patrilineal ends. For example, observing Tij-Rishi Panchami in the rainy season, large groups of women adorned in their blood-red wedding saris fast and dance together. Later, they assemble on river banks to enthusiastically purify themselves with hundreds of ablutions. Another festival, Dasai, provides opportunities for men to worship and attempt to

control the destructive and nurturing Goddess Durga, symbolizing the patriline's vulnerability to and dependence upon its affinal women.

The liveliest section of the work is a chapter on how the two dimensions of status affect the lives and relationships of actual women. Vivid case study materials bring to life the bearers and subjects of these complex symbolic notions. Regrettably, this section is all too short, and in the rest of the volume there is a paucity of such intimate glimpses of female experience.

Chapter 1, which is oddly organized and suffers from some significant omissions, tantalizes the South Asianist by only briefly mentioning "the parma system" of labor exchange groups arranged by women (pp. 23, 24). The fact that the Narikot villagers—never enumerated—share but two pairs of oxen rates only a footnote (p. 33). This reviewer searched the book in vain for more information on this intriguing co-operation in agricultural endeavors. In fact, while material matters are mentioned, they are decidedly minimized throughout the study (see especially p. 136). The author's reluctance to proceed beyond the realm of ideology and symbolism leads to some apparently circular explanations and to inadequate treatment of the practical material importance of the much-exalted agnatic solidarity to both men and women.

Bennett's study is well-written and produced, with but few typographical errors. Nicely-drawn figures and clear photographs illustrate the text, and a glossary is helpful to those unfamiliar with Nepali.

Some chapters are perhaps overly detailed, and the volume may be heavy going for some readers, especially those not well acquainted with Hinduism. However, all serious scholars of South Asian social structure, gender roles, and religion will find much of interest in this insightful and informed study.

Jack GOODY, *The Development of Family and Marriage in Europe*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983. 308 pages, U.S. \$39.50 (cloth), U.S. \$12.95 (paper).

By Joseph McHugh
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In his latest work, Goody applies his considerable experience as a social anthropologist to a far ranging body of historical data, to the effect of

identifying the sequence of events and influences that have given shape to European domestic institutions. While the issues presented in this study are extremely complex, the main emphasis is given to the role of the Church in promoting change in kinship and marriage in Western Europe. The key to the Church's influence upon European kinship lies in that institution's ability to regulate those social practises most intimately associated with the maintenance and transmission of property.

The importance of property transmission to the realms of kinship and domestic affairs has been discussed previously by Goody, most notably in his *Production and Reproduction* (Cambridge University Press, 1976). In that earlier work, the author identified a variable labeled "diverging devolution" (that is, the transmission of property to heirs of both sexes through such mechanisms as bilateral inheritance and various forms of dowry), as a key variable in distinguishing the domestic organization of Eurasian societies from that prevailing in Black African societies. In Europe, the Church's regulation of the transmission of property not only enhanced the wealth of that institution, but provided, as well, the basis for the emergence of the distinctive characteristic of the European model of kinship, marriage and family.

Throughout the middle ages, the impact of the Church on social life reflected the theological, political and economic interests of that institution. As the Church acquired vast land holdings and great wealth, the nature of the institution changed. It is the pursuit of its own material interests throughout this period that emerges as the factor exerting the most pressure on domestic institutions. The goal of gaining control over property was accomplished by the introduction of changes to existing marital customs, many of which had the effect of limiting the number of ways by which one could gain heirs. The emphasis on monogamy was continued, but new regulations forbidding or discouraging concubinage, divorce, remarriage and adoption were introduced. In addition, revision in the method of calculating degrees of relationship greatly expanded the number of the categories of consanguineal and affinal relatives prohibited for marriage, affecting further the ability of families to maintain property. By making marriage a sacrament, the Church was able to rule upon questions of the validity of unions and the legitimacy of offspring. The authority of parents and close kin over the marriage of younger persons was diminished by requiring that the parties to the marriage must give consent and that a bond of affection exist between them. This regulation reduced the ability

of parents to use arranged marriages as a device for maintaining or acquiring control of property.

While these policies were restrictive in limiting the "strategies of heirships" among Europeans, the Church also adopted other practices which tended to enhance its own economic interests. Celibacy for layman was celebrated as an ideal status and celibates as well as others among the faithful were encouraged to will all or part of their property to the Church as an aid in achieving salvation. Daughters from prominent families who entered religious life often brought a 'dowry' given to the Church or to the religious order they joined.

Compliance with Church policy regarding marriage was by no means universal in Europe. Conflict between the Church's economic aspirations and those of the laity, commoners as well as aristocrats, led to resistance against many of the formal regulations and a continuance of older marital practices, which were supported by community standards. In many communities, for example, marriage to cousins and to close affines continued, and in many communities, parental authority over the marriage of children was upheld. Yet, even in the face of irregular marriages the Church was able to increase its wealth by selling dispensations which in effect validated the marriages.

As secular institutions increased in importance, the Church's ability to exercise authority over marriage and the disposition of property was challenged. With the emergence and spread of Protestant sects, the Roman Church's exclusive spiritual authority was also compromised and its political and economic position further weakened. Competition between the material interests of the Church and the state eventually touched upon questions of which institution would exercise control of marriage, inheritance and other domestic arrangements. As civil authority increased, the influence of the Church was weakened and marriage regulations were revised. One consequence of these reforms was the reduction of the number of prohibited relatives, adopted first in Protestant areas and eventually being adopted by the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England.

It is impossible in a short review to do more than outline the main line of Goody's elaborate argument. The book is very rich in detail culled from what is at best an uneven historical record. From this material the author has managed to identify the complex interplay of factors that helped to shape the characteristic patterns of kinship and marriage that emerged in Western

European societies. Nowhere is this complexity better illustrated than in the author's discussions of the struggles of the Scottish clans against Church and state, and the conflict between the Church and Henry VIII over the issue of the validity of his marriage to his brother's wife and the consequences of the same for his later marriages. Social anthropologists should welcome Goody's book as a valuable substantive study, and should benefit as well from this example of how historical data can be effectively employed in the investigation of anthropological problems. Among other scholars concerned with the social and institutional histories of western Europe, Goody's work will certainly provoke controversy. In this way, the book should serve as a springboard for further research on the development of European domestic institutions.

Stephen P. DUNN, *The Fall And Rise Of The Asiatic Mode Of Production*, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. 154 pages, £ 4.96 (paper).

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In *The Fall And Rise Of The Asiatic Mode Of Production*, Stephen Dunn describes the Soviet debate on the Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) — viz., Marx's notion that societies in India, China, and perhaps elsewhere had, for relatively long periods, a predominant set of social relations in which taxes from agricultural communes supported chieftains, ruling clans, or priest-kings who organized trade, warfare, or irrigation for the community as a whole.

Dunn is, perhaps, one of the few Western anthropologists qualified to describe a Soviet anthropological debate. For many years, he has translated articles from Soviet anthropological journals, and has selected articles from Soviet journals for translation and publication in *Soviet Sociology* and *Soviet Anthropology and Archaeology*, both published by International Arts and Sciences Press.

Dunn describes himself as an 'independent' Marxist, and argues that the Soviet Marxist theory of history, and the Soviet debate on the AMP, were, and remain, substantive and fruitful. This is not to say that the Soviet AMP debate was not affected by political and ideological factors. Indeed, Dunn

claims that the AMP theory was abandoned in the 1930s for political reasons. Some of these had to do with maintaining consistency of Marxist theory (e.g., if the ruling elite in the AMP served the community as a whole, how was it exploitative?), but others had concrete implications for Soviet and Comintern policy. According to Dunn, Soviet and Comintern policy-makers believed that support for China's Kuomintang (KMT) was justified only if the predominant social relations in China were feudal. Dunn is not explicit about the reasoning behind this view; presumably, Comintern and Soviet policy-makers reasoned that an alliance between the KMT, representing bourgeois nationalism, and the Chinese Communists could succeed in ridding China of feudal lords as well as imperialist penetration, thus laying the foundation for a bourgeois social order, which was considered a precondition of socialism. Insofar as proponents of the AMP theory denied that China was, or had been, predominantly feudal, the political consequences of their view were unacceptable — viz., renunciation of support for the KMT. The former position prevailed, and the theory of the AMP was rejected. From 1930-34 until the resurgence of the Soviet AMP debate in the early 1960s, Soviet scholars and politicians, led by Stalin, propounded a universal evolutionary progression from communal forms to slavery, through feudalism to capitalism, culminating in socialism and communism.

On the basis of careful examination of Lenin's references to the AMP, Dunn rejects Wittfogel's claim that Lenin, from 1894 to 1914, accepted the theory of the AMP, and subsequently rejected it. According to Dunn, there is no evidence that Lenin ever accepted the AMP theory. Dunn's view also contradicts those of earlier commentators like Bailey and Llobera, and Skalnik and Pokora who, like Wittfogel, characterize the 'early' Lenin as a proponent of AMP theory.

The AMP debate resumed among Soviet scholars around 1964. Today, prominent Soviet scholars argue for and against various qualified versions of the AMP theory, and the debate has become international.

Dunn concludes his book by stating his own position in the current AMP debate. He regards Greco-Roman slavery as aberrant, and therefore unsuitable as a model for a universal stage of socio-cultural evolution. He follows the Soviet scholar, V.N. Nikofofov who, in light of data on ancient societies which have emerged since Marx's time, proposes replacing the slaveholding social order in the Marxist scheme of socio-cultural evolution