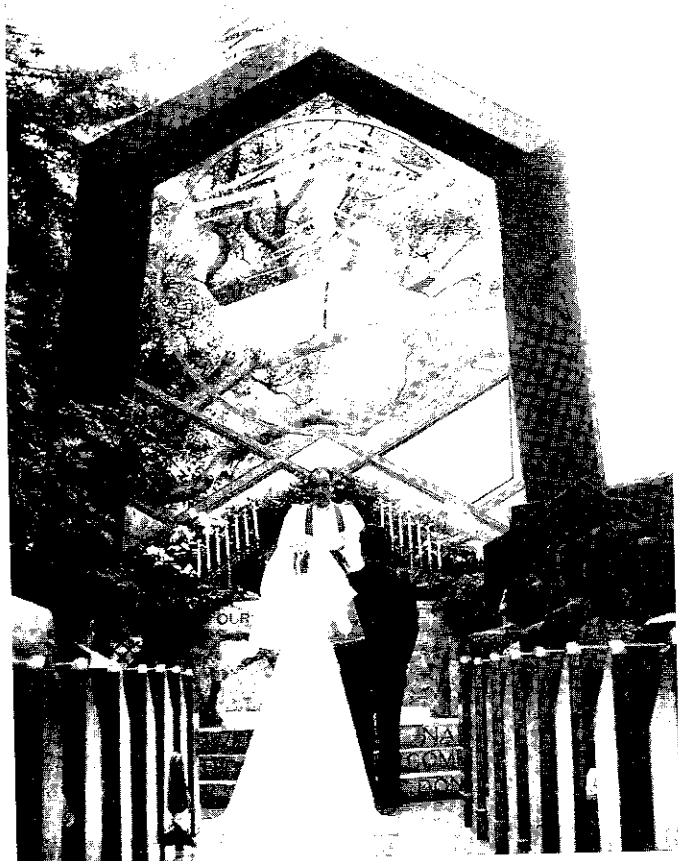


9

MATE SELECTION



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*Chapter Outline***Mate Selection: Free Choice or Arranged?***Marriage Regulations***Why Marriages Are Arranged: Love and Marriage****Arranged Marriages and Dowry in India****Mate Selection in Feudal and Contemporary Japan****Institutional Matchmakers: A Comparison of Contemporary Japan and America****Conclusion**

In earlier chapters, I discussed an important structural change occurring in family systems—the movement toward the conjugal family. The conjugal family emphasizes the importance of the marital relationship and the ties of parents with children. In contrast, the consanguineal family stresses the extended-kinship relationship based on a common ancestry. In this family form, the emphasis is on the reciprocal ties and obligations of individuals with their extended kin. The importance of the conjugal (marital) relationship is deemphasized, whereas the individual's involvement with the consanguineal (blood) family is emphasized.

A most dramatic piece of evidence of the movement toward the conjugal family system is in the areas of premarital sex, conceptions of love, and mate selection. In many societies, men and women were not expected to choose the person they would marry; marriages were arranged by their parents and kinsmen. The freedom to choose one's spouse is an emerging phenomenon. In this chapter, I investigate the whys and wherefores of arranged marriages and nonarranged marriages. I examine the factors that accounted for the prevalence of arranged marriages and the various forms these marital arrangements took. Of considerable interest is the relationship of modernization processes with marital-arrangement patterns and the contemporary modification of these patterns. Changing conceptualizations regarding premarital sex and love and the relationship of these to marital-selection arrangements attract attention. The consequences of the changes in attitudes and behavior regarding sex, love, and marriage for the individual, the family, and the society are investigated and analyzed. I conclude by looking at singlehood as an alternative to marriage.

MATE SELECTION: FREE CHOICE OR ARRANGED?

Who do people marry? One way this question can be answered is to look at how spouses are chosen. When persons have freedom to choose their spouses, individual motives account for marital decisions (Stephens, 1963). These can include romantic love, sexual desire, loneliness, desire for children, and the feeling of the attainment of adulthood. In some societies, individual motives are allowed to be the determinants in selection of spouses. However, the majority of the world's societies chose to have family elders arrange the marriage of the potential couple. Frequently, this occurred with-

out the consent of the prospective marital couple, and in some societies, like Hindu India, China, and Japan, the couple did not meet until the marriage day. In these societies, individual motives, like romantic love, were not supposed to be factors in mate selection. For example, in classical China or in feudal Tokugawa Japan, love was viewed as a tragedy and at best as irrelevant to the family. The criteria for the selection of a spouse revolved around such matters as the size of the bride-price or dowry, the reputation of the respective kin groups, and traditional, customary, and obligatory marital arrangements.

In his now classic cross-cultural survey on family customs in other societies, William N. Stephens (1963) found that those societies that had extended-family systems or unilineal kin groups tended to give the heads of these families, who were usually men, a great amount of authority and power. They either had the entire responsibility for arranging the marriage of their children or did not allow children to choose for themselves without reserving the right to veto that choice. Further, those societies that were characterized by a nuclear conjugal-family system and bilineal kin groups were the only ones that allowed free choice of mate with parental approval not being necessary. Stephens concludes that "the form of mate choice is in part a function of extended kinship: when large kin groups are strong and important, then marriage tends to be a kin-group affair—it is taken out of the hands of the potential bride and groom" (Stephens, 1963:198).

This strong relationship between types of family organization, extended or nuclear, and the form of mate choice is consistent with earlier discussions of conjugal and consanguineal systems. The conjugal-family system, which takes the nuclear form, emphasizes strong husband-wife and parent-child ties. As William J. Goode (1963) has observed, the *ideology* of the conjugal family emphasizes the independence of the marital couple from extensive obligatory ties with extended consanguineal kin. It stresses individual choice in mate selection that is guided by romantic love and sexual attraction. On marriage, the couple set up their own independent household (neolocal residence), which symbolically and actually demonstrates their commitment to the development of strong conjugal ties and the desire to sever potentially dominating ties with either kin groups.

The consanguineal family, on the other hand, is a quite different form of family organization. Here, the stress is on the maintenance of extended blood relationships. On marriage, a couple may move into or near the household of either the husband's or wife's family (patrilocal or matrilocal residence). Children are socialized into the larger extended kinship group. The consequent strong blood ties of unilineal members of the consanguineal-family system thus account for the greater need and desire to control the mate choice of their members.

Marriage Regulations

There is a striking increase in the number of societies that now allow individuals to marry through free choice in contrast to their former predominant practice by which family elders arranged the marriage. The choice of eligible mates for their children was governed by two conflicting types of marital regulations. The first, *endogamy*, refers to the requirement that an individual marry someone within a particular group.

This group could be a kinship group, a clan, a religious organization, or any other social category. The second, *exogamy*, refers to the requirement that an individual marry someone outside a particular group.

Exogamous rules usually coincide with *incest taboos*—the prohibition of sexual intercourse between certain blood relations, for example, between father and daughter, mother and son, or brother and sister. Exogamous rules are primarily kinship based and generally prohibit sexual activities and marriage among people who are closely related. Frequently, exogamous rules are extended to apply to larger social units. In classical China, a man was not permitted to marry a woman who had the same surname, even though they were not kinship-related. Certain societies prohibit the marriage of members of the same village or the same tribe. Yonina Talmon (1964) reports that children raised in the same peer group on a collective settlement (*kibbutz*) in Israel are informally pressured against intra-*kibbutz* marriage. She suggests that the excessive familiarity of young people socialized together prevents them from falling in love.

There are numerous theories of incest and exogamy. This is a much discussed topic in the social sciences with many explanations proposed through the years. The explanations seem to fall into two main categories: First, there are theories that revolve around biological, genetic, and psychological factors to explain individual motivations; second, there are theories that deal with mate-selection patterns in terms of their effect on intragroup or intergroup solidarity with macrolevel analysis of the society.

Falling into the first category are such theories as (1) a horror instinct against incest, (2) Freudian psychoanalytical theory, and (3) genetic influences on the incest taboo. The first theory, horror instinct against incest, postulates that individuals have an instinctive horror of having sexual relations with close kin. To avoid such an occurrence, incest taboos were created to provide further social pressure against the commitment of such a "horror." This theory is somewhat contradictory in that if there was an instinctual dread of incest, there would be no need for the creation of incest taboos socializing individuals against it. This theory has been generally discarded.

The Freudian psychological theory in regard to the incest taboo was developed out of Sophocles' tragedy, *Oedipus Rex*. Oedipus, the son, unknowingly slays his father and marries his mother. On becoming aware of his actions, he blinds himself. Freud stressed the universal tendency of children to have a strong sexual attraction to the parent of the opposite sex. Incest taboos arise as a reaction to incestuous wishes and are a rejection of the forbidden and frightening sexual attraction of the opposite-sex parent. The Freudian theory is weak in that it does not explain the extension of incest taboos beyond the immediate family.

The genetic theory postulates that incest taboos were developed to prevent the potentially harmful effects of inbreeding, that is, madness, hemophilia, and so on. The theory emphasizes the real and imagined deleterious effects of inbreeding and ignores the positive ones; for example, the inbreeding of cattle to develop a superior strain of usable beef. Further, although there is some genetic evidence of the negative consequences of inbreeding, the theory assumes a level of biologic sophistication and knowledge that goes beyond that exhibited by most persons in most societies. An extreme example is the Arunta of Australia who were unaware of the role of the father in procreation.

There are several theories that focus on societal factors in regard to the incest taboo. George Murdock (1949) used psychological behavior theory, Freudian psycho-

analytic theory, and previously developed theories in anthropology and sociology to construct his theory of the incest taboo. His ideas were enhanced by his use of his own cross-cultural data from 250 societies. He argues that the origins of the incest taboo arise out of the unwillingness of parents and siblings to satisfy personally the child's sexual desire. Further, the family, which provides important societal needs (economic cooperation, reproduction, education, and socialization), wishes to avoid anything that weakens it. It is thought that weakening the family would, in turn, weaken the larger social system. Conflict within the family resulting from sexual competition and jealousy would be highly disruptive. Thus, "the reduction of sexual rivalry between parents and children and between siblings consolidates the family as a cooperative social group, promotes the efficiency of its societal services, and thus strengthens the society as a whole" (Murdock, 1949:295).

Murdock then argued that the extension of the incest taboo to more distant and remote relatives beyond the nuclear family can be explained by the behavioristic psychology concept of stimulus generalization. According to this principle, any response evoked by one stimulus will tend to be elicited by other stimuli in direct proportion to their similarity to the original stimuli. Murdock sees that secondary or remote relatives who resemble a sexually tabooed member of the nuclear family will have the avoidance behavior extended to them. His illustration is that of a mother's sister (ego's aunt), who may possess similar features and other physical traits of the mother. This relative will be perceived as similar to the mother and thus will be sexually avoided. He states that there is a prevalence of applying the same kinship term to the two women in many societies (both referred to by the term, mother) and ego exhibits similar patterned behavior towards both.

Murdock does not answer the question on why the marital restrictions and taboos are extended further in many societies. The theory of reciprocity by Claude Levi-Strauss seeks to answer this question. Levi-Strauss (1957) believes that the prohibition of incest is one of the rules related to reciprocity. The marriage between individuals belonging to different nuclear families may be viewed as an exchange between two families, one providing the husband, the other providing the wife. The newly formed nuclear family is conceived of as a social organization that links several families in a chain of reciprocal exchanges. The cultural development of a society is seen to be dependent on the development of a more complex culture than can be developed by any given family. Cultural development is enhanced by the linking of families into wider social organizations through reciprocal social bonds.

To illustrate this, Levi-Strauss utilizes the following model. The prohibition of incest is a rule of reciprocity when it means that a family must give up a daughter or sister if its neighboring family will also do so. Marriage is viewed as an exchange between families in which, at one point in time, a given family gives up a daughter and at another point accepts one. Thus, there is a perpetual mutual obligation to supply women in marriage. If one looks at a hypothetical situation in which one family has a monopoly on desirable women, whereas the other family in the group has none available, a potential climate of hostility and tension can arise. Reciprocity thus serves to assure a more balanced state. This illustrative model assumes that women are treated as property and that there is a scarcity of women for marriage. It is based on an assumption of male polygyny and on the greater attractiveness and desirability of cer-

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tain women. More important, the principle of reciprocity in regard to marriage is seen by Levi-Strauss as assuring the occurrence of social exchange and the establishment of alliances between families. The incest taboo serves as the basis for the development of groups larger than the nuclear family and is a key organizing factor in society. The family, then, is vital to society as it establishes broader social relationships through the patterned exchange of sexual relationships.

Rules of endogamy run counter to the rules of exogamy, or totem prohibition. To repeat, endogamous rules require a person to marry someone within a given social grouping. These social groups can range from the extended-kinship system, the tribe, community, social class, race, or nationality. Linton C. Freeman (1974), following the analysis of George Murdock, sees the basis for endogamous rules stemming from *ethnocentrism*, or group conceit, which is common to all social groups. Freeman observes that, almost universally, outsiders are suspect; people tend to distrust or to dislike people who are different from themselves. People discriminate on the basis of race, creed, and cultural backgrounds. Conversely, they accept members of their own family and community more readily, since they share a common background and heritage. In sex relations and mate selection, ethnocentrism is expressed by prohibiting marriage with outsiders through specified rules of endogamy. In the United States, endogamous rules are exhibited through pressures for individuals to marry someone of the same race, social class, ethnic group, religion, and age. The term *homogamy* has been used to refer to this governing principle of marital choice. Homogamy is the tendency to marry someone who is like ourselves in the important social attributes of race, class, education, age, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Endogamy (marriage within a group) and exogamy (marriage outside a group) can be seen to delineate a "field of eligible mates" (Freeman, 1974:355). This field of eligible or approved marital partners can be large or small, depending on the relative strengths of the two complementary tendencies of endogamy and exogamy. Together, they are seen to make up the rules for preferential mating. In addition to preferential mating, a second principle is seen to underlie the process of mate selection: marriage arrangement. Marriage arrangement is defined by Freeman as referring to the degree to which persons other than the prospective bride and groom participate in the process of selection; for example, whether parents are involved in the mate-selection process. Here, again, a wide range of societal patterns exist, ranging from families having little involvement in the selection of a spouse to societies where families select the individual's spouse with little or no involvement by that individual in the decision-making process.

The question now arises, why should and how do people other than the man and woman immediately involved arrange marriages?

WHY MARRIAGES ARE ARRANGED: LOVE AND MARRIAGE

A more systematic analysis of the factors that have accounted for the widespread prevalence of arranged marriages is now undertaken. Of particular interest is the role of love in the arrangement of marriages.



Amlee, a 5-year-old bride, unties string knots of her husband, Ashok, 15, during their marriage ritual in the Indian desert village of Srirampur of the northwestern state of Rajasthan on May 14, 1994. Hundreds of children across the state were married on the Hindu auspicious day "Akha Teej" despite the government proclamation against such marriages.

Two different theoretical models have been put forth on why marriages are arranged. One theory, developed by Bernard Farber (1964), stresses the importance of rules regarding mate selection in terms of preserving family culture. The other, developed by William J. Goode (1959), stresses the restrictions placed on mate selection to maintain the social-stratification system through the emphasis on lineage and kinship obligations and involvements.

According to Farber (1964), family culture is seen to have as its constituent elements the norms and values that people hold regarding courtship, marriage, divorce,

kinship identity and obligations, socialization of children, residence, and household maintenance. Exogamous rules may lead to individuals marrying outside of their family group; potentially the possibility does exist that one will marry someone with different norms and values and open the family system to external influences that can be damaging to the continuity of the culture of the particular family group. The choice of marriage partner, then, is controlled by the family of orientation to assure transmission of the family culture to future generations.

Thus, at the point of marriage of the child both parental families are in danger of having their culture interrupted in transmission by the introduction of possibly contradictory values from the other family. Restrictions in the society on mate selection would delimit the direction of change in family cultures from one generation to the next. If certain families will permit marriage only with other families very similar to themselves in norms and values, then a general continuity of the cultures of both families can be expected. (Farber, 1964:63-64)

In his essay "The Theoretical Importance of Love," William J. Goode (1959) delineates the reasons on why marriages are arranged and the way love is controlled. Goode argues that allowing individuals the freedom to marry on the basis of individual motives, particularly love, can be potentially disruptive to lineage patterns and weaken kinship systems. When marriage involves the linking of two kinship groups and when kinship serves as the basis of societal organization, mate choice has important consequences for the social structure. Thus, when marriage affects the ownership of property and the exercise of influence, the issue of mate selection and love have been considered "too important to be left to the children" (Goode, 1959:43).

Goode states that, "Kinfolk or immediate family can disregard the question of who marries whom, only if a marriage is not seen as a link between kin lines, only if no property, power, lineage honor, totemic relationships, and the like are believed to flow from the kin lines through the spouses to their offspring" (1959:42). Societies that emphasize kinship find it necessary to control marriages.

Goode, then, distinguishes among several methods for controlling the selection of marital partners. First, it is controlled by child marriage, where, as in India, the young bride moves to the household of her husband and the marriage is not consummated until a much later date. This practice precludes the possibility of the child falling in love and also limits the resources for the opposition to the marriage. While much less common today and against the law, such child marriages still occur in India [Associated Press (1989) cited in Benokraitis (1993)]. In 1981 [Associated Press (1981) cited in Eshleman, (1994)], an estimated 40,000 to 50,000 children were married over a single weekend in violation of a law banning such marriages. In this rural section of India these marriages occurred in keeping with centuries-old Hindu traditions. Children as young as a 2-year-old girl and an 8-year-old boy were ceremoniously married in a ritual that usually is kept secret from outsiders. It was presumably publicized as a reaction to a law banning child marriages that was trying to be implemented.

Second, mate selection is controlled by kinship rules, which define a relatively

small number of eligible spouses. For example, the Yaruros of Venezuela, a nomadic tribe of fisherman and hunters, is a society that restricts marriage to cross-cousins: That is, a man must marry the daughter of his mother's brother or the daughter of his father's sister. Incest taboos and ethnocentrism are employed to restrict the field of eligibles. Freeman (1974) observes that this practice fosters interfamilial solidarity by forcing marriage to people who live nearby but in different communities. The Hottentots of southwest Africa are a group of seminomadic herders. They too, require cross-cousin marriage. But, unlike the Yaruro, the Hottentots are free to choose for themselves which cross-cousin to marry (Freeman, 1974).

A third practice of mate selection is controlled by socially and physically isolating young people from potential mates. This makes it easier for parents to arrange the marriage of their children in that there is little likelihood that these children would have developed love attachments to conflict with their parents' wishes. In feudal Japan, the social contacts between members of the opposite sex were limited and were highly ritualized. They were permitted only in the presence of elders. This had the effect of minimizing informal and intimate social interaction. I shall return to a more in-depth analysis of this practice in feudal Japan a little later in this chapter.

Fourth, love relationships are controlled by strict chaperonage by duennas or close relatives. Here again, young people are not permitted to be alone together or in intimate interaction. This practice has existed in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and in Latin America. It has also prevailed among recently arrived Hispanic immigrants to the United States. The play—later made into a movie—*West Side Story*, is a tragic love story that updates *Romeo and Juliet* to the sidewalks of New York City. It depicts the influence of family and friends on a Puerto-Rican-born young woman and her forbidden love for a young white-ethnic man. The clash of youth gangs, battles over turf, and the questioning of traditional family cultures are used vividly depict the power of romantic love.

The fifth and final way in which love is controlled is typical in American culture. Although formally allowing individuals to choose their own marriage partners, parents control the field of eligibles through the influence of the informal contacts of young people. This is done through living in selected neighborhoods, asserting control over the schools that children attend, restricting guest lists to parties and informal gatherings, and making the children aware of their parents' ethnocentric biases relating to race, religion, ethnicity, social class, and so on.

In the United States, individual motives play an important role in deciding the question of whom one should marry. The common assumption is that two people marry on the basis of love. However, the determination of eligible lovmates is influenced by the principle of preferential mating. Incest taboos preclude the eligibility of immediate kin. Frequently, the incest taboos extend to the first-cousin relationship, but there are no clan or other kinship structure restrictions.

Rules of endogamy are expressed in ethnocentric beliefs that define "suitable" marriage partners to people of the same social class, religion, ethnic group, and race. The field of "suitable" partners is further limited to people of the same age group and to people who live nearby in the same neighborhood or community. Until recently, ethnocentric biases were supported by legal statutes in the most dramatic case—racial

intermarriage. As late as 1967, almost twenty states still had antimiscegenation statutes, with penalties up to ten years imprisonment and fines up to \$1,000. In that year, the Supreme Court declared that such laws were unconstitutional.

Although there has been some trend away from ethnocentric restrictions, the general pattern continues to be the marriage of people who share similar backgrounds, values, attitudes, and interests. Informal ethnocentric pressures, which still characterize American mate-selection processes, help account for the fact that marriages outside these norms tend to have greater difficulty and more frequently end in divorce. The result is that although the field of eligibles can be the entire unwed opposite-sex population, it is in fact significantly narrower because of these endogamous practices.

The choosing of one's spouse is ideally depicted as being solely within the province of the individual. Parents, friends, and others are normally not supposed to interfere in the mate-selection process. In addition, it is felt that such interference is not effective and can even backfire. For example, *The Fantasticks*, a long-running contemporary play, uses this normative guideline as the central theme: Two fathers scheme to keep their respective children apart in the hope that such interference will have the opposite effect and bring them together. In many cases, parents are not informed or consulted by children about their prospective spouse either prior to or after the wedding.

Although their formal input in the marital decision-making process is diminished, the parents have a strong indirect influence in the mate-selection process. By residing in selected areas and sending their children to selected schools, parents restrict the options of young people in forming friendships. Further, through parties and selective invitation lists and verbalizing their own ethnocentric biases, parents influence their children. By influencing the informal social contacts of their children, the parents indirectly control the mate-selection process. As William J. Goode states, "Since youngsters fall in love with whom they associate, control over informal relationships also controls substantially the focus of affection" (Goode, 1959:46).

The following passage from Peter L. Berger's *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective* nicely conveys American mate-selection processes:

In Western countries, and especially in America, it is assumed that men and women marry because they are in love. There is a broadly based popular mythology about the character of love as a violent, irresistible emotion that strikes where it will, a mystery that is the goal of most young people and often of the not-so-young as well. As soon as one investigates, however, which people actually marry each other, one finds that the lightning-shaft of Cupid seems to be guided rather strongly within very definite channels of class, income, education, racial and religious background. . . . The suspicion begins to dawn on one that, most of the time, it is not so much the emotion of love that creates a certain kind of relationship, but that carefully predefined and often planned relationships eventually generate the desired emotion. In other words, when certain conditions are met or have been constructed, one allows oneself "to fall in love." (Berger, 1963:35)

In summary, where societies emphasize the importance of kinship lineage and its preservation—and support this by establishing strong ties between family interests and economic and social interests—marriages are arranged by the couple's respective consanguineal families. On the other hand, where societies emphasize the importance of the conjugal relationship between husband and wife and deemphasize their obligations and responsibilities to the extended-family system, the choice of marriage partners is more or less left up to the individuals involved.

ARRANGED MARRIAGES AND DOWRY IN INDIA

Contemporary matchmaking patterns in India has fascinated Americans. However, juxtaposed with these often humorous—to Western sensibilities—accounts of the attempt to use modern matrimonial want ads in newspapers with traditional concerns for matching astrological signs and caste groups has been a concurrent darker and horrific story of mate selection processes. These are the too prevalent and tragic incidents of wife abuse and bride-burnings that have become known as *dowry deaths*. In this section I will discuss these contemporary phenomena.

India has become an increasingly mobile, urban society. For the more highly educated, the centuries-old practice of arranging marriages has been transformed by modern technology. In New Delhi, on a typical Sunday, more than 1,500 “matrimonial” advertisements appear in the three largest newspapers. These ads are now appearing throughout India's urban centers and are placed primarily by affluent Hindi middle-class parents and grandparents and are designed to marry off their children. The typical ads detail the qualifications of the prospective groom's or bride's caste, education, income, and demands. The following ad is illustrative:

“Beautiful, fair, slim, educated girl wanted for slim, 27 year old, 173cms respectable Punjabi Khatri project engineer. 2,500 [rupees] per month salary—plus perks.” The salary would be about \$215 U.S. dollars. (Fineman, 1985)

The ads are not confined to Indians living in India but include those who have migrated elsewhere. The periodical *India Abroad* has classified ads appearing on a regular basis that seeks to matchmake globally (see Figure 9-1). For both men and women the appearance of matrimonial advertisements promoting their marital qualifications are justified in that they believe that the ads give them a wider choice of potential spouses.

The matrimonial ads reflect the changing circumstances of modern times. As families migrate outside of the familiar social circles of the ancestral village to urban centers and to other countries, these ads have replaced the traditional matchmaker, socially connected relatives, and parental networks. While there has been an upsurge in Westernized love matches, the prevalent pattern are arranged marriages. They, however, have been tempered by the final veto power of the children, and prior to the marriage, children are allowed to date their future spouses between the engagement and the marriage (Moore, 1994).

INDIA ABROAD

CLASSIFIED

MATRIMONIAL	Matrimonial—Female (Cont.)	Matrimonial—Male	Matrimonial—Male (Cont.)
<p>Matrimonial — Female</p> <p>New York based physician sister invites correspondence from professionals for very attractive, vegetarian Rajput Doctor sister 23, merit scholar Intern Lady Hardinge Delhi, family of physicians. No bars. Reply biodata, photograph.</p>	<p>Well placed Indian parents invite correspondence for their attractive 25 year old daughter, U.S. citizen, completing graduate school, has infant daughter. No bars.</p>	<p>Correspondence invited from educated, cultured, good looking girls, 22-27, for tall, Gujarati Charotar Patel, immigrant Doctor, 29, of excellent family background, completing residency. Parents well settled in Gujarat. Please send details with returnable photograph.</p>	<p>Parents seek suitable match for their son 25, handsome, business executive. Returnable photograph with biodata.</p>
<p>Gujarati Charotar Patel parents invite correspondence from professionals for daughter, U.S. educated, citizen, professionally employed, 24, 5'11". Please correspond with returnable photograph and biodata to:</p>	<p>33 years, 157 cm., divorced, successful Punjabi, M.Sc., Ph.D. girl looking for suitable match, Green Card holder.</p>	<p>Correspondence invited by divorced professional of Indian background, 54, 5'6", \$44K income, many interests.</p>	<p>Physician brother invites correspondence from beautiful professionals for handsome, 5'7", 25 year old brother, MS Electrical Engineering, USA, currently doing Ph.D. computer, student visa, well connected Punjabi Brahmin family. Call: or send returnable photograph to:</p>
<p>Proposal invited from compatible, handsome professional for beautiful, talented, Bengali Hindu girl, 25, US raised, BS, professional, employed. No bars.</p>	<p>Brother invites correspondence from Gujarati successful professional for attractive sister, graduate, 35, divorced. Biodata and photo must.</p>	<p>Physician brother invites correspondence from beautiful professionals for handsome, 5'7", 25 year old brother, MS Electrical Engineering, USA, currently doing Ph.D. computer, student visa, well connected Punjabi Brahmin family. Call: or send returnable photograph to:</p>	<p>Physician, well settled, early 40's seek correspondence from attractive, cultured, educated, home-loving girls under 25. Religion no bars. Reply photo/biodata. M-8117, IA.</p>
<p>Match for convent educated, pretty, smart, Gujarati girl, 27 yrs., 5', B.A., L.L.B., from Bombay, currently visiting USA.</p>	<p>Brother invites correspondence from well-settled professionals for 29 yrs. old girl (M.B.S., M.D., M.B.C.S.), 5'6", cultured, charming, fair, currently living in U.K. Brother in States.</p>	<p>Physician brother invites correspondence from beautiful professionals for handsome, 5'7", 25 year old brother, MS Electrical Engineering, USA, currently doing Ph.D. computer, student visa, well connected Punjabi Brahmin family. Call: or send returnable photograph to:</p>	<p>Professional, late efforts, seeks understanding, caring, uncommitted, slim, South Indian lady with character, 43-54. Send photo.</p>
<p>Punjabi Brahmin parents invite correspondence for their highly cultured and extremely beautiful, US citizen daughter, 5'2", 32 years, physician, innocent divorce. Boy must be Punjabi, broadminded and highly educated from respectable family.</p>	<p>Brother invites correspondence from Rajput professionals for beautiful, well educated sister, 23, in India. Send returnable photographs/Biodata.</p>	<p>Physician brother invites correspondence from beautiful professionals for handsome, 5'7", 25 year old brother, MS Electrical Engineering, USA, currently doing Ph.D. computer, student visa, well connected Punjabi Brahmin family. Call: or send returnable photograph to:</p>	<p>Physician, well settled, early 40's seek correspondence from attractive, cultured, educated, home-loving girls under 25. Religion no bars. Reply photo/biodata. M-8117, IA.</p>

FIGURE 9-1 Modern classified matrimonial ads in *India Abroad*.

Some years ago, social scientists David and Vera Mace spoke to a group of young Indian women. They discussed then-prevalent American dating patterns, going steady, courtship rituals, and engagement and subsequent marriage. The Maces elaborated on American romantic love traditions and expected the Indian women to express their envy of the superiority of American free choice versus Indian arranged marriage patterns. Instead, they received unexpected responses to their query: "Wouldn't you like to be free to choose your own marriage partners, like the young people do in the West?" (Mace and Mace, 1990: 130). These women felt that they would be put "in a humiliating position" by calling attention to themselves by trying to be attractive to men. If they did not attract a man, it would indicate failure reflecting their own shyness and inability to compete with other young women. Most importantly, they felt that they were incapable of judging the marital worthiness of the potential husband. As one woman put it:

"Besides, . . . how would we be able to judge the character of a boy we met and got friendly with? We are young and inexperienced. Our parents are older and wiser, and they aren't as easily deceived as we would be. I'd far rather have my parents choose for me. It's so important that the man I marry should be the right one, I could so easily make a mistake if I had to find him for myself." (Mace and Mace, 1960: 130).

The attitudes of the young women reported by the Maces so many years ago is still prevalent in today's India. It is based on a different view of love than that found in the United States. In the United States one is expected to fall in love before one marries; in India love comes after marriage. In India love is believed to develop out of social arrangements and is subservient to such arrangements. Love, in fact, is "created" between two people by arranging the right conditions for it. These "right conditions" is marriage based on shared backgrounds and interests (Bumiller, 1985). In a Laksmi Bai College study, 82 percent of all female students surveyed felt that arranged marriages with their consent was the preferred form of matrimony. Almost half opposed courtship before marriage (Moore, 1994).

Moore provides the following account of a woman, Dhoundiyal by name, who after rejecting two previous marriage candidates agrees to marry a third. Her decision was based on a brief exchange in which he expressed strong support for her studies, career, and intellectual pursuits. This was despite the fact that even a few weeks before her wedding, she confided, "I don't have a sense of who he is—he's not even totally a friend yet" (cited in Moore, 1994). Her wedding and married life is depicted as follows:

The two were married in a lavish traditional Hindi wedding ceremony, and now Dhoundiyal leads a double life. In New Delhi she exemplifies the modern Indian career woman—in outlook, attitude and dress. But on weekends, as the train draws closer to Lucknow, where she visits her husband's family, Dhoundiyal pulls a veil over her face and slips rows of bangles on her arms, rings on her toes and bracelets on her ankles—the accoutrements of the proper Indian bride—and kisses the feet of her in-laws when she enters their home.

"I don't feel a conflict," she said. "They are supportive of my job. This is my way of reassuring them I'm not going to break up the family." She paused. "I didn't marry for love. I married the family." (Moore, 1994)

Traditionally, Hindu marriage was considered sacred, based on the devotional worship of a wife for her husband. The ancient practice of *suttee* where a woman was expected to throw herself on the funeral pyre and burn to death with her deceased husband has been banned since 1829. It reflected a view that marriage was "based on the devotional worship of a wife for her husband, much like the love for a god" (Bumiller, 1985). This Hindu religious tradition still holds for many in the middle classes where girls are told from childhood that they will love the man that their parents select for her.

Unfortunately, increased incidence of wife abuse and even death among these urban middle-class elite has brought into question the traditional nature of mate selection and marriage. Another qualification not placed in the matrimonial want ads is the demand for a dowry—an Indian tradition in which the bride's family provides monetary incentives and gifts to the groom's family. As the cities have grown, so has materialism. The outcome is an increased demand for greater dowries. Often, this proves insufficient, and each year more and more young brides are found dead under mysterious circumstances. Soon thereafter, the groom's family advertises once again for a prospective second bride—and a second dowry (Fineman, 1983, 1985).

In the introductory chapter of Robin Morgan's (1984a) comprehensive collection of articles by leading feminists from seventy countries, *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*, Morgan writes that the "woman as property" concept is epitomized by the dowry. Dowry is seen as "the price of a life (and a death)." The dowry in essence represents a payment for a woman.

The term "dowry" often is used interchangeably to refer to two types of marriage purchase. "Bride-price" involves payment to the family of the bride by the groom or his family. Often it is seen as payment that compensates the bride's family for loss of her services. "Dowry" is when the bride or her family provides payment to the groom or his family thus ensuring that woman will have a husband and ostensibly to enhance her marriageability and to provide property for her. In essence, both forms—bride-price and dowry—represent a payment for a woman. Morgan observes that the payment is almost never controlled by the woman herself; instead, it binds the bride to a marriage that she may never have wished to enter in the first place and prevents her from leaving.

George Murdock (1949), in his comprehensive cross-cultural survey of marriage and family practices, observed that payments for a bride can be seen as a compensation for the loss of work represented by the loss of a daughter. The practice occurs most frequently when the rules of residence for the new couple are patrilocal, especially when the bride is removed from her local community. In Murdock's (1957) *World Ethnographic Sample*, about 70 percent of the societies included have some form of marriage payment. By far the most common is the bride-price, in which the groom's family transfers some property to the bride's family.

Beyond its economic value, the bride-price serves as a symbol of the commitments of the families to one another. It gives the family a vested interest in the stability of the marriage, since the bride's family is more likely to adjust to the loss of the girl if it is accompanied by a gain in wealth and less likely to look forward to a cancellation of the dowry agreement. In marriage situations where marriage is purchased, economic considerations take precedence over romantic or emotional criteria both in the selection of mates and in the maintenance of marriage. For that reason, "[r]eturn of the dowry is one of the most frequent reasons families on either side oppose divorce" (Morgan, 1984c:11).

Murdock asserts that the bride-price "seldom if ever is regarded as a price paid for a chattel, or as comparable to the sum paid for a slave" (1949:21). Yet it must be emphasized that there is an economic component to both consanguineal and conjugal

families. Indeed, the very term *family* comes from the latin *familia*, a term that referred to household property. This property included both people—wives, children, as well as slaves—and objects—fields, house, furnishings, and so forth. Given the economic reality that underlies dowry systems, it should not be surprising to find incidents of dramatic abuse.

The practice of dowry still exists in most parts of the world. In some countries, custom and even statute still require it. In other societies, even when legislation prohibits it, loopholes are often found to get around the law, or the practice takes on a contemporary guise. For example, in Kenya, such customs as the paying of a bride-price still continue to exist. The payment is determined by the girl's level of education and her ability to produce or earn money. Directly contradicting Murdock, Rose Adhiambo Arungo-Olende contends that "Today, bride-price makes the intended bride look like a chattel for sale" (1984:397). She observes that women never have a say on the subject of bride-price. In fact, there are cases in which the bride has to assist her husband financially in completing the payment of the dowry by the groom's family. The dowry can often leave the newly married couple in economic ruin, struggling to set up their new home in the face of the dowry's burden.

Interestingly, even in circumstances where a woman has gained economic independence, traditional marriage through purchase practices can still exist. For example, in Lebanon, education and work have contributed to women's economic independence. The percentage of women in the labor force has increased from 17 percent in 1972 to 25 percent in 1981. In addition to the traditional careers of teaching, nursing, and secretarial work, women have been entering the professions of medicine, engineering, architecture, pharmacy, and law (Ghurayyib, 1984). However, women's gains are still modified by traditional-family practices. The family structure of both Christians and Muslims still adheres to tribal laws and clan loyalties that seek to perpetuate family control. The extended-family system remains the bastion of entrenched traditions which stand against change and women's rights. Notions of women's inferiority and subservience are still articulated. A woman who has achieved economic independence often finds herself "using her job as bait for attracting suitors, thus continuing the dowry tradition" (Ghurayyib, 1984:422). Bowing to family pressure and public opinion and the fear of living alone, women often accept compromises and sacrifice their ambitions.

In India, the rising incidence of dowry murders became so great that massive anti-dowry demonstrations have been a major focus of the Indian women's movement. The feminist journal *Manushi* has reported in both its Hindu and English versions on hundreds of attempted and committed dowry murders and has brought this to the attention of the Western press. Morgan concludes her denunciation of dowry with the following statement:

Only by such indigenous women's activism will practices like these—whether so dramatically posed as in India or subtly preserved through "trousseau" commercialism and symbolic "giving the bride away" in the West—be eradicated, and with that eradication come the end of transacted love, and of women's marital servitude. (Morgan, 1984a:12)

BOX 9-1 The Global Family**Dowry: The Price of a Life (and a Death)**

The horrible cases of murders or forced suicides, "dowry deaths," first reported in India in the early 1980s, have caught the attention of the media and have publicized the pervasiveness of continued abuses of the dowry system. To fully understand why these occurrences happened, it is necessary to provide some background. Traditionally, only sons inherited property, because they were the ones that perpetuated the patrilineal family system. To make the marriage of their daughters more enticing, families gave large dowries to the grooms' families. India has passed legislation that has sought to eliminate this form of gender discrimination. For example, laws pertaining to inheritance now give daughters equal rights with sons. Anti-dowry legislation was passed in 1961.

Unfortunately, families have virtually ignored the laws that attempt to change the system. Young women, whether they are illiterate, poor, and reside in rural areas or are educated and live in the more progressive cities, do not actively oppose the dowry system for fear that they will not marry. Nor do they actively claim their inheritance rights out of respect for tradition and to protect the economic interests and viability of their natal families. In contemporary India, the dowry system has taken on a modern form. A well-educated male of a higher-caste group can command considerable dowry payment (as much as \$10,000 in some cases) from a prospective bride's parents. His parents view such payment as a proper reimbursement for their son's educational expenses. The bride's family sees it as important to marry her well even if the economic sacrifice is severe.

The Hindu family is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal. Men control the chief resources and family authority and inheritance is transferred to the sons. Daughters serve temporarily in their natal family and then move to the household of their husband's family. Their children are raised as members of the husband's lineage. As a consequence, male children are preferred because they will serve their consanguineal family for their entire lives. Sons also bring wealth into

their families through their wives' dowries. The birth of a son is viewed as a blessing; that of a daughter may be an occasion for sorrow and grief. As I discussed previously, female infanticide was a not unfamiliar occurrence in India's past and it continues today in the form of more subtle practices, such as medical neglect.

The dowry represents a payment to the groom's family; it is not a source of personal security for the bride. As evidence is the severe abuse of the dowry system that has resulted in increasing numbers of murders or forced suicides because of familial dissatisfaction with the value of the dowry, reported in villages as well as in urban areas. The 1975 Report from the Indian Commission on the Status of Women reacted to the growing commercial intensity of the dowry system and the growth of violence against brides. It declared that the dowry system was one of the gravest problems affecting women in India.

By 1980-1981, there were 394 cases of brides burned to death in New Delhi. Indian women's groups claim that this figure represents only a very small percentage of the actual cases that occur in Delhi and elsewhere. They believe that the police register only one out of every 100 cases of dowry murder or attempted murder and that for each of these cases six go unreported. In 1983, the number of dowry deaths in New Delhi nearly doubled to 690. In 1987, the government released data on the registered cases of dowry death nationwide as 999 in 1985, 1,319 in 1986, and 1,786 in 1987. In 1992, 4,785 women were killed by their husbands for not providing adequate dowries. On the United States National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" broadcast of July 6, 1995, they reported that the figure was an astonishing 6,000 deaths in the last year.

The increase in "dowry deaths" is a contemporary phenomenon. As I mentioned, the institution of dowry began in India largely because, under Hindu law, parental property was not allowed to be shared by female children. In compensation, parents would give their daughter a gift at the time of her marriage. In time, bride-

grooms and their families made handing over the gift as dowry an institutionalized demand. Especially for younger Indians who covet a lifestyle and whose incomes do not allow them to achieve it, dowry has become a means of bridging the gap. The threat of dowry death has become a form of extortion. The husband and his family can harass, beat, or torture a bride to extract more money from her family. In the extreme case, the bride is murdered. Her death is made to appear accidental (for example, dousing the woman with kerosene and setting her afire and claiming that it was a cooking accident) or as a suicide. The bride's parents are reluctant to prosecute for lack of evidence, for belief that others would think they had reneged on the dowry, or if they have other daughters for fear that they will not be able to marry them off.

The prevalent attitude toward women is instrumental in the violence committed against them. Girls are seen as a responsibility that parents want to get rid of. An example is a man who, after paying off increased amounts of dowry toward his daughter's husband, is finally told that this is not enough and he must take her back. The father laments that the problems are not with the dowry system but with his daughter: "Girl children are a big headache, a big problem. Why this trouble? If we don't give birth to girl children, we wouldn't have these problems. What flows out of our eyes is not just tears, but blood" (cited in Gargan, 1993).

Bumiller, 1990; Fineman, 1983, 1985; Gargan, 1993; Morgan, 1984a; O'Kelly and Carney, 1986; Sharma, 1980

MATE SELECTION IN FEUDAL AND CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

Japan is a society that historically has permitted a wide range of marital eligibles. But the actual choice, especially in the past, was determined by the family, not the marrying person. In this section I will provide an overview of the historical changes that have occurred in Japan. Linton Freeman (1974) in his study of feudal Japan (Tokugawa Japan) in the eighteenth century, observed that it was divided into local small duchies, each ruled by a lord and supported by an army of knights (*samurai*). Governing the society was a hereditary military leader, with the emperor having little importance. As in most feudal societies, there was a clearly delineated social-class system, with each class restricted to designated dwellings, styles of clothing, food, and so on.

The family in feudal Japan was at the heart of an individual's activities. The family was ruled by a patriarch with the assistance of a family council, which included most of the mature males and the old women in the family. The extended family included the patriarch's wife, all his sons and their wives and children, his unmarried daughters, younger brothers and their wives and children, and finally the servants. As head of the family, the patriarch's approval was required for marriages and divorces, for adoptions, and for the expulsion of recalcitrant members. He was responsible for the family's fulfillment of its obligations to the state. Professor Kawishima, a Japanese social scientist, observes the following:

As a means of emphasizing through external impressions the mental attitude of filial obedience, the head of a family (generally the father) enjoys markedly privileged treatment in everyday life. The family head does not do with his own hands even trifling things—or rather is prohibited from doing such