

May 2, 2012: Rituals & Wedding

A. Rites of Passage: Weddings and Songs in Kangra

- a. Last time:
 - i. Asante Market Women
 - ii. Ghana vegetable market in Kana
 - iii. Control by Queen Mothers (each vegetable group has a Queen Mother)
 1. Set prices, settle disputes
 - iv. Why must women work? Matrilineal lineages and inheritances goes from uncles to their sister's son (importance of having a parallel income between husband and wives)
 - v. Polygamy (polygyny): different perspectives of men, older women, younger women
 - vi. Hope of education will give women a better, independent life
- b. Today:
 - i. Kinship terms in contexts
 - ii. Rites of Passage
 - iii. Kangra wedding songs
 - iv. Kinship and caste

Kinship terms in context: a term like "polygamy" (and any others posted on the handout) can describe a social arrangement, but people's experiences of and views on a particular kinship systems vary depending on their location within the system,

B. Polygamy: Yet another perspective

- a. <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/99/i-enjoy-being-a-girl-sort-of>
- b. Elizabeth Joseph, Utah, lawyer
- c. Polygamy as "ultimate feminist lifestyle"; Mormon religion
- d. Sharing duties
- e. This women in one of 8 wives
- f. Paying fellow wife for her work
- g. 2 best friends already had married the husband
- h. Different houses but close together
- i. They have 20 children
- j. Wives have support from each other
- k. Influence who husband marries
- l. "Two wives difficult, need third"; from this women's perspective is that a polygamous marriage is difficult for most men

C. Rites of Passage

- a. Mark transitions
- b. Through space and time

- c. Mark life stages of an individual
 - d. Organize the flow of shared time: calendrical rituals
 - e. Associated with **Arnold Van Gennep**
 - i. Wrote "The Rites of Passage"
 - ii. Looking the ethnographic rituals of cultural around the world
 - iii. Found that rites of passage had 3 stage
- D. Tripartite Structure of Rites of Passage
- a. **Separation** from structures
 - b. **Threshold** – "limen" in Latin
 - c. **Reincorporation** back into structure
- E. Liminality and Communitas
- a. **Victor Turner** found these key points:
 - i. Liminality – "betwixt-and-between" stage of the threshold
 - 1. Anti-structure between social structures
 - ii. Communitas – warm fellow feeling: "We"
 - iii. Among fellow initiates in rites of passage:
 - 1. Homogeneity: no status, no rank
 - 2. Anonymity
 - 3. Nakedness or special costumes
 - 4. Different expected behavior
 - 5. Periods dramatizing key values of society
- F. Rituals of Inversion:
- a. Social hierarchies overturned
 - b. "Carnavalesque" behavior/moments
 - i. Great parting; things that are what they are suppose to be in normal society (anti-structure by Victor Turning)
- G. Marriage in Kangra
- a. For girls, means leaving home of birth for new home
 - b. 2 homes: parent's home (my home behind or my home ahead)
 - c. Transition central to women's ritual, folk (folklore is a collective perspective), art, oral tradition
 - d. Today's focus: local commentary through women's wedding songs
 - e. Parvati: Kangra goddess of mountains
- H. Kangra
- a. Villages are clustered
 - b. Men going out of the country, and sending money back home
 - c. Wedding Songs for Brides
 - i. Just one genre (kind) – many different genres of women's songs for different happy events.
 - ii. "Suhag" songs are sung at weddings of humans and deities (to infuse religious meaning in human weddings)

- iii. *Suhag* comment on kinship roles
- iv. Song to her father/brother/uncle (male figure) to say that she needs to leave to get married; it's a collective event
- v. Bird (red henna); girls in this patrilineal system will go off to different villages to get married
- vi. One song called "A bird in your courtyard"; the in-laws' house is considered the "alien land"
- vii. Daughter will sign over the land to keep good relations with their brothers (despite the Indian law that gives women the right to inheritance)

I. Traditional Kinship in Kangra

- a. Patrilineal
- b. Patrilocal joint (extended) families
- c. Sons inherit property
- d. Daughters given dowry on marriage (inheritance before a parent's death)

J. Marriage in Kangra

- a. Arranged marriages
- b. Caste endogamy (marrying inside one's caste)
- c. Village exogamy (marrying outside village)
- d. Alliance between two families
- e. Horoscope matched
- f. Exchanges of gifts; dowry

K. CASTE

- a. From Portuguese word "casta"
- b. Colonial center for the French, Danish Portugal, and Britain
- c. Birth-ascribed status
 - i. Conflates two emic terms:
 - 1. *Varna* – "estate" – 4 varnas in Hindu religious text
 - 2. *Jati* – "kind" – 1000s, regional based
 - ii. Traditionally associated with hereditary occupation
- d. Occupation
- e. Previously, segregated by rules of separation around food and physical contact
- f. Endogamy (sometimes hypergamy) (or women marrying up into a higher caste)
- g. Ideology of ranking through purity/pollution – not the same as power (but a dominant caste within a locality)
 - i. System of social stratification and inequality
- h. Influences politics and social life