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## PREFACE

The present volume takes a somewhat different form from previous numbers in this series. It was not our original intention to produce a volume of this shape. We had other contributions in mind and had discussed the main themes in a seminar we ran in Cambridge during the academic year 1970-1, whose members we collectively thank. But the theme outgrew the limited size of the publication, and we decided to publish our own rather lengthy contributions as two separate but interrelated essays, which were more widely comparative in scope than earlier essays in this series.

This policy had certain advantages since we could then concentrate upon Africa and Asia respectively. Moreover, we had often talked around the points we raise and found ourselves dissatisfied with some of the current treatment of kinship and marriage in anthropological and sociological writing. Certain themes of contemporary polemics, such as that turning on alliance and descent, seemed more profitably treated in a context that gave a greater emphasis to material considerations, a context that would enable us to deal with differences as well as similarities, with variables as well as constants. At the core of our analysis of kinship and marriage, therefore, lies a concern with the interrelationship of the productive and reproductive systems, particularly as these affect the position of women. Indeed it is the ability of women in many parts of Asia to acquire the same kinds of property as men (and often from men) that we want to contrast with the separation of the sexes that is characteristic of Africa – at least in the sphere of the devolution of the patrimony.

There are two conceptual/terminological points we would like to bring to the attention of the reader. Payments from the bridegroom or his kin for the use of the bride (given directly to her or else channelled through her father) have been called 'indirect dowry' by Goody; Tambiah refers to such gifts by phrases such as 'the analogue of brideprice which is transformed into dowry'. There is no disagreement about the nature of these gifts which should be distinguished from the bridewealth of Africa.

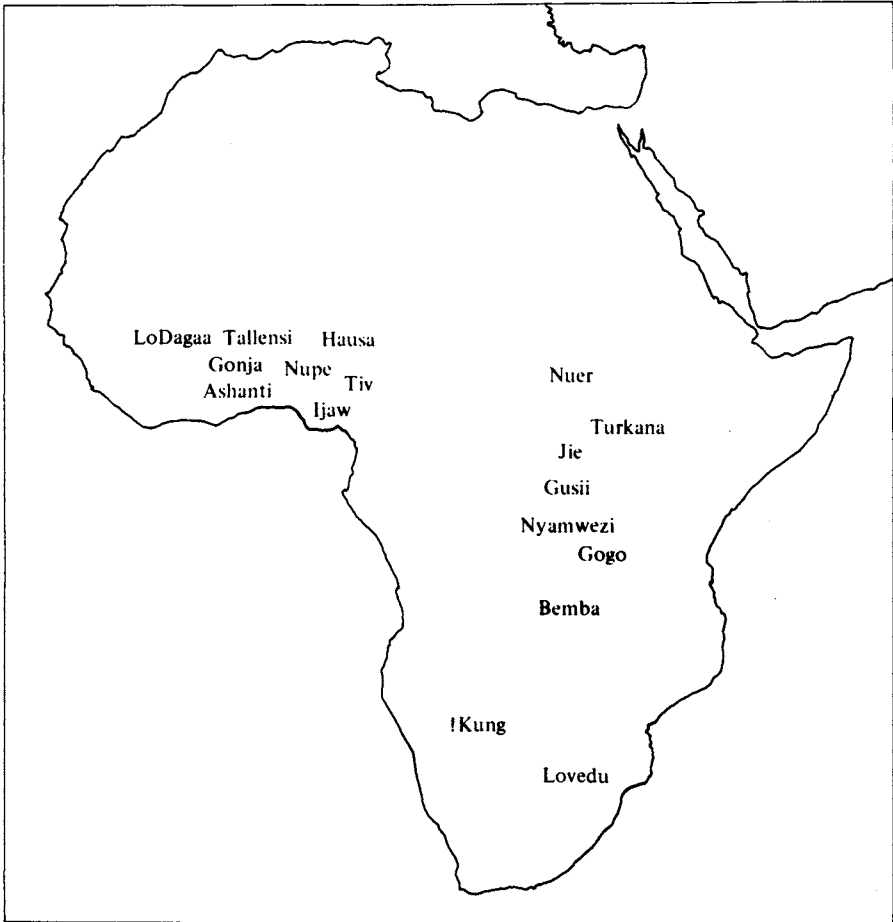
Secondly, while Goody refers to the mother's brother as a kinsman (at least where repeated marriage is absent), Tambiah calls him an affine. The use of these particular terms probably arises from the respective African and South Indian backgrounds to our research. We do not intend this should be a focus of polemic between us. Indeed, our aim is to by-pass, shortcut, even eliminate such arguments by calling attention to the nature of the property relations between the partners of a marriage and with the parents of each, i.e. to the interrelationship of marriage transactions and the devolution of property.

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Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues for their stimulation, their criticism and their interest. Tambiah is especially grateful to Edmund Leach for his valuable comments and suggestions, particularly those relating to the sections of his essay about Burma. Tambiah's essay contains numerous words from the classical Sanskrit, Pali and modern Indian, Sinhalese and Burmese languages. The orthography adopted follows accepted conventions of romanization but omits all diacritical signs.

Cambridge, 1972

J.R.G.  
 S.J.T.



*Location of peoples discussed*