

# Parents reach out to get kids married

**SAGA (Kyodo)** A Fukuoka-based group promoting marriage is finding success in arranging "marriage meetings" for parents who do not want their sons and daughters to remain single.

Bringing profiles of their offspring to the gatherings, parents discuss various issues to find a suitable match — personality, career and even whether a candidate can take over the family business.

About 15 meetings have been held over the last 2½ years in which 400 people have participated, resulting in 26 marriages in Saga and Fukuoka prefectures, according to Ukiyui Club, which is organized by marriage-counseling companies in the two prefectures.

Hatsuyo Nakano, who heads Ukiyui Club, believes proxy matchmaking has become popular because parents generally want their children, who are not in a hurry to wed, to find partners.

Fewer Japanese are marrying, and those who do are marrying later. In 2005, 714,261 couples got married, down by 6,156 from the year

before, while the average age for men getting married rose to 29.8, and that for women to 28.0, compared with 26.3 a decade before, according to government-released data.

In a so-called marriage meeting in early September held in the city of Saga, about 12 people, including mothers whose offspring are in their 30s and 40s, attended.

A mother in her 50s said she decided to join the meeting because her thirtysomething daughter reportedly told her, "Find me a partner if you want so much for me to get married."

A 70-year-old woman who came to the meeting without telling her 40-year-old son showed relief when she found a partner for him who seems suitable.

A woman in her 60s whose son got engaged after the "parents marriage meeting" called the encounter a practical approach.

Though feeling that using the system is better than seeing her son remaining single, she said, "It's a bit embarrassing that my son can't find a partner on his own."