

Temple Families and Inheritance

– Discourse of mothers, successors, and wives –

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This paper develops a hypothesis regarding the guidelines for educating successors to Buddhist temples that have been converted into family systems, by analyzing the relevance of the positions of monks' wives and the education of their successors, factors related to the selection of successors, and the locus of factors for the growth of successors. The author focuses on the volatile positions of monks' wives responsible for inheritances and on the question of how the temple family and surrounding environment influence the successors.

Taking a life-story approach, this paper comparatively investigates the discourses of mothers, successors, and successors' wives from three Koyasan Shingon Buddhist temples. The following hypotheses were obtained from this investigation.

- 1) When monks' wives are in highly volatile positions, they bolster the successors' education.
- 2) When monks' wives are unable to play any role other than childrearing, they increase their proximity to the successors and bolster their education.
- 3) When the direct education of successors by monks' wives is motivated by (1) or (2), it may counteract the proactive selection of these successors.
- 4) Successors feel negatively toward unilateral involvement by region and by temple family members, but positively toward mutual involvement.
- 5) Successors' ideologies and faith grow within the matrix of involvement by region, temple family members, monks, and the surrounding people.
- 6) When grandparents are positively accepted by successors, such involvement can motivate the grandparents to become successors.